

Om GamGanapathayenamahSree Maha Saraswathyai namaha

LECTURE ONSHODASA SAMSKAARAMSByDr. Smt.T.S.VISALAKSHI GARU on 9th November,2022.

TRANSCRIPTED BY Mr.AVALUR VENKATASURYAPRAKASH

PIN NO. 287

Yesterday due to time constraint, we couldn't complete those six points. In fact, there are so many points to be learnt or discussed. Now we are going to learn about sadharanadharmas, visheshadharmas ,sashwathadharmas,dharma sukshmas and apaddharmas etc. In Mahabharatha Dharmaraja was treated as the embodiment or personification of dharma. Whatever he says or speaks was accepted as dharma only. But, there was dharma sukshma in Whatever he did.In Kurukshetra war Dharmaraja said before guru Dhronacharyathat, Aswatthamahathaha(loudly)kunaraha(with very low voice) on a hint given by none other than Bhagwan Sree Krishna, who is the incarnation of Lord Sree Mahavishnu, and hence, it was not adharma to say so, in order to contain the aggression of guru Dhronacharyawhich was very much required at that point of time, to bring him down.As Bhagwan Sree Krishna himself suggested to say so, hence, it is not adharma in order to make dharma to win over adharma. Even though guru Dhronacharyaisa pious and ardent follower of dharma,since he is fighting on behalf of Duryodhana, who is a staunch follower of adharma, and hence , he should be eliminated to install dharma inplaceofadharma.

And in another instance where, Lord Sree Rama, Seetha Matha and Laxmanawere being taken to aranya (forest) by Sumantha, as ordered by the king Dasaratha , on their way the king Dasaratha following them for certain distance, shouting at Sumantha to stop the chariot, and not to take Lord Sree Rama, Seetha maatha and Lakshmana to forest. On hearing this, Sumantha looked at Sree Rama for his consent, for stopping the chariot, but lord Sree Rama said , not to stop the chariot, and to continue the journey. On hearing this, Sumantha asked Lord Sree Rama, what if, the king Dasaratha asks on his return to Ayodhya, as to why he did not execute his (Dasaratha's) order of not to continue their journey to aranya (forest). Then Lord Sree Ramatold Sumantha, that he should say that king Dasaratha's order was unheard, on account of sound emanated by the chariot, which he was driving, in order to make his (Lord Sree Rama's)father Dasaratha to keep away from "Dharma Glaani" i.e., not following the path of "Dharma", there by keeping his father safe from adharma path.BecauseIkshvaku dynasty rajas never gone back on their promises, however hard to keep them executed. This is again dharma sukshmamof saying that king Dasaratha's order was unheard on account of sound of chariot which, kept him away from adharma path. That's why Lord Sree Rama instructed Sumantha to say not heard of king Dasaratha's order. As Sree Rama is who is the personification of Dharma and, in order to keep Dharma upright and, to follow it, even a small lie if, it is essential to utter, there is no harm in saying so. This is for implementing dharma.

In the nature, the rivers, and the great oceans flow with great speeds, but they never transgress the banks(we call it CheliyaliKattas in Telugu) . The mountains , they stay wherever they are. They never move here and there.

The pancha bhuthas, the rivers, trees, plants, and mountains, they never work for themselves . They work for others' welfare.

**PAROPAKAARAAYA VAHANTHI NADYAAHA,
PAROPAKAARAAYA PHALANTHI VRUKSHAAHA,
PAROPAKAARAAYA DUHANTHI GAAVAHA,
PAROPAKAARAARTHAMIDAM SAREERAM.**

The rivers flow for others. The trees bear fruits for others. The cows give milk for others This mortal body is for helping others. The gods are having their own dharmas. When ever, the humans do penance for the grace of God's, and when the Gods are pleased with their penance they appear before the humans and, they grant the boons for which, the penance was done. This is the dharma of gods. There are dharmas prescribed for every human beings like, men, women, children, parents, husbands, wives, gurus (teachers), Shishyas (students or disciples), friends, employees (sevakas), employers (yajamanis) etc.

The general dharmas such as speaking truth, practicing dharma, keeping peace and harmony, and helping others and doing yagna-yagas and protecting the wildlife and environment, serving the old-aged parents, and discharging their duties towards the society and one's own family etc., They should have compassion for others i.e., daya for fellow human beings. We have to develop Aathma gunas and Daiwa gunas which, elevate ourselves towards SUDDHA SATWA GUNA and thereby we can discharge our duties with chaturvidhaphala purusharthams by which, we can achieve our aim of attaining Moksha or Liberation i.e., salvation.

Certain dharmas vary from person to person. For each individual, many dharmas are there depending upon the position in which he is placed like, son/daughter to parents, father/mother to children, brother/sister to siblings, student to gurus or teachers, as neighbors to other people in that area, as a professional or employee to employer, as an employer to employees, as relative to other relatives. We have to behave in a good manner with our society. We have to discharge our duties diligently by adhering to the path of dharma by adopting the dharma prescribed for the religion and family in which we are born and uphold the values of the family and religion in which we were born. There are separate dharmas prescribed for different people in different roles they Play at each time like father, mother, brother, sister, wife, husband, guru, shishya, employee, employer, citizen etc. Besides this, we have to observe an important one, which is Varnashrama Dharma, to be followed by us. The varna dharmas and ashrama dharmas are very important in our lives.

Then, the most important dharma of Lord Sree Rama, while going to aranya (forest), it was his dharma to follow the order of his father i.e., king Dasaratha to go to forest and make his father to observe SATHYA NISHTA. That is dharma sukshma. We have to observe such dharma sukshmas and follow them in our lives.

As all of us know that great rivers and oceans do not cross the banks (which we call cheliyalikattas), likewise, we should also not cross the barriers of dharma, which is very important.

Here, some people may get doubts as, when there are prescribed dharmas for everyone like gods, nature, human beings, and animals, similarly, all asuras or rakshasas are also having their dharmas. Rakshasa dharmas are like troubling the Sajanas, destroying the yagnas and yagas and followers of sathvika dharmanuyayees like rishis, Gods, and human beings. Here, we come across with a question like when, rakshasas were doing their dharma, why they were punished by the gods. This was a question posed to us at least once in our lifetime. Here we have to feel that all the dharmas are created by vedas and the devathas, which are for the goodness of the humankind and others. But, rakshasas are not the followers of the dharmas that, were preached by devathas and vedas. They follow their own dharmas according to their own whims and fancies which result in sufferings of devathas and humans.

Hence, this type dharmas that are detrimental to the harmonic life of others, is unacceptable and hence, they were punished by God's incarnations. So, dharmas are always made for the sole benefit of others and are made, keeping the welfare of entire nature in general and welfare of the human beings in particular. Sincerakshasa dharmas are always the sole motto of troubling others and hence, their dharmas are not accepted or treated as dharmas and hence, they are adharmas. For this reason, in order to establish peace and harmony in all lokas, the gods have punished rakshasas whenever, dharma Glaani happened by undertaking various incarnations.

In this context, lord Sree Krishna told Arjuna while, teaching Bhagavad-Gita in Kurukshetra battlefield through this sloka that, whenever dharma Glaani happens, he will take incarnations to establish dharma again on the earth.

**YADA YADAAHI DHARMASYA GLAANIRBHAVATHI BHAARATHA |
ABHYUTTHAANAMADARMASYA THADAATHMAANAM SRUJAAMYAHA ||**

Similarly, Goddess Jaganmatha also declared that

**ITTHAM YADAA YADAA BAADHA DAANAVEBHYO BAVISHYATHADAA, THADAA
AVATHEERYAAHAM KARISHYAAMI AVA SANKHYAYA YANU ||**

Also, paramathma Sree Krishna said:

**PARITHRAANAAYA SAADHUNAM VINASAYACHA DUSHKRUTAM |
DHARMA SAMSTHAAPANAARTHAAYA SAMBHAVAMI YUGE YUGE ||**

The above three are the verses denote the purposes of taking avathIaras.

Lord Maha Vishnu took incarnation of Lord SreeKrishna for the purpose of establishing the dharma and marthya sikshana and teach all human beings a very good knowledge about dharma through Srimad Bhagavad-Gita. And Lord Sree Maha Vishnu took incarnation as Lord Sree Rama Chandra to give the ideals of human relationships to all living human beings. So, lord Sree Rama Chandra became ideal for all human beings for his virtues and ideal behavior as a son, as a brother, as a friend, as a ruler, and even as an enemy and also exhibited all these qualities and became ideal by observing “Ekapathni vratha” which means adhering to a single wife all through the life and “ashritha rakshana” which means protecting the surrendered person, who ever he may be, an enemy, friend or other person.

Lord Sree Rama Chandra and Lord Sree Krishna always practiced the dharma nishta and Sathya nishta i.e., They never deviated from the dharmik path of life. Sree Rama Chandra went into exile to keep his father’s promise and made his father observe Sathya nishta. That is why, all the people like to have a son like Sree Rama Chandra for his ideals and, we want to see all the men with Sree Rama Chandra’s qualities and, all the women with Seetha Matha’s qualities, as she followed her husband and underwent all the hardships, she faced during the vanavasa(exile). When Lord Sree Rama Chandra was about to leave for vanavasa and went to get the blessings of his mother Kausalya, she blessed him saying that he should never do Dharma Glaani

**YAM PAALAYASI DHARMAM THVAMDRUTHYAACHA NIYAMENACHA |
SAVAI RAAGHAVA SAARDHOOLADHARMA SWAA ABHIRAKSHATHU||**

Hey, Raghava Shardhoola, which dharma you are observing with firmness and as a principle, that dharma will protect you. So, in other words she said, if, we take care of dharma and follow dharma , that dharma will take care of us, that means, dharma will protect us.

Srimad Ramayana taught us about Sathya dharma and all dharmas related to family, society, and all human relations.

Sree Mahabharatha made us realize or aware of the losses that occur due to hatred and khusthithas. Sree Mahabharatha narrated social dharmas and so many morals, which are to be followed by us. There are so many upakhyanas and all these stories give us morals and the dialogues spoke by various characters contain much dharma sukshams.

Srimad Bhagavatham speaks of Bhagavatha dharma i.e., bhakti dharma and hence, it is called as bhakti sastra and, it speaks about ananya bhakti and ekantha bhakti. Bhagavatha and Sree Krishna paramathma both are inseparable. In other words, Bhaagavatha is Sree Krishna and Sree Krishna is Bhaagavatha. So, sathya, dharma, samatha, prema, and ahimsa are to be followed by all human beings throughout their lives, and not now and then, and whenever they feel or like to follow. So, dharmacharanashould become quite natural and part and parcel of our lives, and it should be default one of our lives. Since, childhood, all children are to be taught about dharma and dharmacharana and devotion in their lives.

If we follow dharma by default, then dharma protects us.

Pravarakhya used to worship Fire God with all devotion, by doing trikala Sandhyavandanam and trikala Agni aradhana. That was a principle he adopted, and he adhered to it, by all means. Once, a siddha (sage) came to his house and, pleased by the devotion with which Pravarakhya served him, the siddha blessed Pravarakhya with a lepanam or balm or ointment, which is having the power of taking Pravarakhya anywhere in the world at once after applying it to his feet. Pravarakhya having the desire of seeing the Himalayas since, a long time, wanted to utilize the opportunity that is available in the form of ointment given by Siddha. In order to fulfill his long-cherished dream of visiting the Himalayas, he prayed to lord Agnideva, the Fire God and applied the lepanam to his feet and found himself on gorgeous mountain range The Himalayas. His joy knew no bounds after seeing the Himalayas and he enjoyed scenic beauty and serene atmosphere and, worshipped all the gods who were present there. In the evening he wanted to rush to home to perform Agnikaarya or Agni aradhana and saayam Sandhyaavandanam. He prayed to God to take him home at once but, for his dismay, the already applied ointment got dissolved due to the weather conditions at Himalayas and hence, he could not reach home in time and not found any other way of reaching home, he prayed to his aradhana daivam Agni deva to show him the path and, pleased by his character and dharma nishta, the Fire God Agni Deva immediately took Pravarakhya to his house and provided Pravarakhya an opportunity to fulfill his dharma nishta. Accordingly, Pravarakhya could attend to his Agnikaarya as usual by the grace of Fire God. This is a clear case of the benefits or blessings of dharmacharana in one's life. The elders say that there should not be any delay in dharmacharana.

VILAMBANACHARETH DHARME CHALAM CHITTHAM VINASYATHI

Dharma karyas are to be observed immediately whenever we think of doing them.

Because,

NITHYAMSANNIHITHA MRUTYUHUKARTHAVYO DHARMA SANGRAHAHA

If we delay, we do not know whether, we would be able to do these things in future as, mruthyu i.e., death is chasing us at all the time as shadow and, there is a saying by saint Kabir Das in this regard which goes as follows:

कलकरेसो आजकर,
आजकरेगा अब।
पलमे प्रलय होयेगी,
बहुराष्ट्रीयकरेगा कब॥

The meaning of the above verse is that we should not postpone or delay in doing anything.

Also, Viswakavi Ravindranath Tagore said the following lines:

When death comes and knocks at my door, I will set before my guest the full vessel of my life. That means, we should always be ready to meet our guest i.e., The death at any point of time, without leaving anything unattended, and we should happily leave this world.

Out of many phases of dharma, even, if we follow one phase at least, the dharma will definitely protect us in times of hardships, just like Pravarakhya followed one dharma of worshipping of Fire God, he was saved from the problem he faced on Himalayas. He was immediately brought back from Himalayas by the Fire God when he was not having any hope of reaching back home on time to pursue his dharmacharana of Agnikarya.

Sathya palana as dharma by the cow in the story of cow, calf and tiger, the cow was having Sathya palana as dharmacharana. When once, the cow was coming from the forest after grazing, it was encountered by a tiger. The cow requests the tiger to leave him for a while to enable her to meet her calf for the last time to teach her calf about dharmacharana and feed the calf with her milk for the last time. The tiger at first did not listen to it, and on repeated requests of cow, wanted to test the cow whether, the cow would stand by its word and let her go, and the cow as was promised by her it comes back to tiger after feeding her calf for the last time and teaches her calf about sathyapaalana. Moved by the Sathyapaalana of the cow, the tiger releases the cow of her obligation of becoming prey to the tiger.

Even Bali Chakravarthy was very famous for his dana guna (charity). Once, he was approached by Lord Maha Vishnu in the avatara of Vamana Murthy (dwarf vatu), and was asked for three feet of land and, he immediately obliged the vatu to give three feet of land and at that moment and, he was warned by rakshasa guru Sukraacharya not to oblige his request by revealing the real identity of Vamana Murthy and the consequences of obliging his request. But Bali Chakravarthy did not heed to the advice given by guru Sukraacharya, and granted the wish asked for by Vamana Murthy. Then, Vamana Murthy grew to the level that one could not see his entire body. After that Vamana Murthy occupied the entire earth with his one foot and sky by another foot and, asked Bali Chakravarthy where to keep his third foot. Then Bali Chakravarthy with a view to not to go back on his word, he offered his head as the place to keep Vamana Murthy his third foot, by offering his head i.e., his body by relinquishing his "AHAM" i.e., ego which act is called as "BALIDANAM" after this episode of Lord Vamana Murthy's request. So, in order to keep up his word Bali Chakravarthy was ready to go to "PATHALA LOKA" without any type of displeasure, as this act of the great Vamana Murthy is against the interests of danavas, nevertheless he stood by his words and went to Pathala Loka. By his virtue the Lord Maha Vishnu was very much pleased and he himself guarded (took his gatekeepers duty) in the palace of Bali Chakravarthy in Pathala Lokam. In fact, this act of Bali brought him more fame to him than Lord Indra, because Lord Indra got back his kingdom only, but Bali Chakravarthy was given Pathala Lokam as his kingdom and he was assured "INDRA PADAVI (THRONE OF INDRA)" in future for his dharmacharana and devotion and BALIDANAM.

In the story of SIBHI CHAKRAVARTHY he kept ashrita rakshana as his dharma and when, once a pigeon approached him when, it was targeted by an eagle for its food. He offered the eagle with his body's flesh which, is equal to the weight of pigeon and in fact, he offered his entire body after some pieces of his flesh were not sufficient, to weigh the pigeon. By, seeing this the gods who were there in the form of pigeon and eagle, took to their real forms and blessed SibiChakravarty for his dharmacharana and praised him. Bhakta Vibhishana and Meerabai proved that, in order to reach God, we can leave anything and anyone which, is not a sin. It is dharmacharana only.

Our maharshis asked us to worship Surya Deva (The Sun God) who, is pratyaksha paramatma saying "**AASAVAADITHYO BRAHMA**" and veda commands as ,

**Maathru devo bhava,
Pithru devo bhava,
Acharya devo bhava,
Athidhi devo bhava.**

Lord Sree Rama Chandra also said the same thing,

**Aswaadheenam katham daivam prakaarai rapiraagyathe
Swaadheenam samathi kramya maatharam, pitharam gurum.**

There are many ways for us to pray to God, who is not visible to us, and who is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. But he aswaadheenam that means he is not in our control. But, the mother, father and guru, these three are called pratyaksha daivas. To get the boons from Almighty God, we have to do lot of penance and through lot of bhakti, but our parents and gurus do not require any representation of our desires and without asking, they fulfill all our wishes and desires immediately. When they are doing their dharma sincerely, being their children, how much intensity we have to show in execution of our duties as children and disciples of our parents and gurus.

The God is aswaadheena for us but, our parents and gurus are in our swadheenam, that means they are readily accessible for us. That is why they are called pratyaksha daivas and they take care of us with utmost care. Our sanathana dharma says that we should follow varna dharmas and ashrama dharmas and, we should perform srothas kaaryaas and smarthas kaaryaas and, we should offer the fruits of all our acts to God without any desire and that is preached in The Bhagavad-Gita. By following the path shown by sanatana dharma, it is easy to reach either God or attain liberation (Moksha).

Once, a foreign lady after hearing to the speech of Swami Vivekananda, got very much impressed by his wisdom and knowledge and was of the opinion that, if she could marry Swami Vivekananda, she may be blessed with a son of his wisdom, knowledge and approached Swami Vivekananda with a proposal to marry him. Then, Swami Vivekananda replied to her that, why to waste so much time as it may take so many years and instead, if she can accept Swami Vivekananda as her son, then her wish of having a son of his caliber, would be fulfilled instantaneously. By hearing the proposal of Swami Vivekananda, she

was dumbstruck and understood the values of dharma and its followers. Swami Vivekananda never deviated from thebrahmacharya vratha and dharmapatham and upheld the values and dharma pravarthana.

If anybody questions about what dharma is, we can quote a poem of Andhra Mahabharatha which, goes as follows:

**Oruleyavi onarinchina naravara |
Yapriyamu tana manambuna kagu
Itarulakavi seyakuniki paraayanamu
paramadharmapathamula kellan ll**

ఒరులేయవోయోనారించిననరవర
యప్రోయముతనమనంబునకగు
ఇతరులకవసోయకునోకోపరాయణము
పరమధర్మమపథములకొలొలన్

This means:

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

In other words, what things others do to you will hurt, those things are not be done to others by you. That is the great DHARMAM.

In this context Duryodhana once said in Mahabharatha about dharma as follows.

జానామోధర్మమనచమోపరవృత్తో
జానామోఅధర్మమనచమోనోవర్ష్యత్తోః|
కోనాపాదోపనోహృదోస్థోఢోఢోస
యథానోయుకోతోస్థోమోతథాకరోమో||

The meaning of the above slokam goes as follows:

I know about Dharma, but I am not in a position to practice it and make it my habit. I also know what is adharma but, I am unable to come out of its clutches. Whoever there in my mind and whatever is his wish, the same is being done by me. The ego in him made to speak like that. Thus, by saying the above words, he continued to do adharma, and by those acts of adharma he ruined his entire family of 100 brothers and friends and gurus and lakhs of army personnel etc., for his adharmik deeds.

So, we say,

**Yatho dharmasthatho krishnaha
Yatho Krishnasthatho jayam.**

That means, where there is dharma, there exists or lives God(Krishna) and where, God(Krishna) exists, there will be victory.

That is why all Pandavas succeeded and all the Kauravas were ruined. That is why everyone should do their dharmas without fail. That is why Lord Sri Krishna said in Bhagavad- Gita like this,

**Swadharme nidhanam sreyaha |
Paradharmo bhayaavaha ||**

It's better to die by doing one's own Dharma, rather than getting high positions or benefits by practicing paradharmas. We should always be in the path of dharma, in which we are created by the God and, we should never change our dharma or religion or matham just, like we can not change our mother in a life time. Likewise, we should always adhere to our religion.

According to yuga bedhas, we have to follow dharma as per the smruthis as follows:

- In Kruthayuga they followed Manu dharma.
- In Trethayuga they followed Gouthama Smruthi.
- In Dwaparayuga they followed Shanka Likhitha Authority
- In Kaliyuga, we have to follow Parasharaha Smruthi i.e., The Smruthi written by the sage Parasara's son i.e., Sree Veda Vyasa Maharshi, and also in Kaliyuga we follow Aapasthambha Guhya Sutras. So, we have to follow whatever is mentioned in them.

In Bhagavatham, it is mentioned as the dharma devatha was having four feet in Kruthayugam (krutha means done). So, every dharma was scrupulously followed by each and everyone. The Dharma devatha was in the form of cow which was moving on its four legs or feet namely Tapas, Soucha, Daya and Satyam.

In Trethayugam, one of its four feet, namely Thapashad gone and the dharma devathawalked on three feet. (Threta means three).

In Dwaparayuga, the dharma devatha walked on its two feet. Here soucha had gone. Dwo means two. So, dharma devatha walked on its two feet namely Daya and Sathyam.

In Kaliyuga, the Dharma devatha is walking on one foot i.e., Sathyam only. Sathyam remained in all the four yugas. Truth alone is there in all four yugas, i.e., it is always there.

**Kalou kesava keerthanam
Raama hare, Sree Krishna hare.**

Naama smarana is essential in Kaliyuga to obtain salvation or Moksha.

Now, we have to develop sathvika gunas by our devotion and our behavior of Sathya and Ahimsa.

Now, the seventh point is, what are the characteristics of dharma. There are many characteristics of Dharma.

**Ahimsa parama dharmaha
Dharma hisa thadaivacha
Ahimsa, Sathya Mastayam
Brahmacharyam aparigrahaha**

In Manu Dharmasastram one sloka is there:

**Dhritih kshama damosteyam saucham indriyanigrahah
Dheer Vidya satyam akrodho dasakaam dharma lakshanam**

These ten characters are to be followed for dharmacharana.

- Sama is antheindriya nigraha.
- Dama is external senseorgans.
- Astheya means robbing.
- Saucham means physicaland mental purity.
- Indriya Nigraha means Controlling internal and external sense organsi.e., all ten sense organs and mind also.
- Hreesh means Bashfulness i.e., one has to hesitate to do adharmika karyas.
- Vidya is to acquire knowledge
- Sathyam means Truthfulness
- Akrodha means not getting Anger in any type of situation.

All these are lakshanas of dharma.

Now, due to lack of time, I just gave the meanings only.

All these points are dealt in detail, in lectures given for Veda Samskruti Samiti Sanathana Dharma.

Now the 8th point is, this one point which consists of 21 points. Now I will not repeat them, as I already said on the first day. So, most important points of Sanathana dharma under this point i.e., eighth point, those 21 points plus 7 points i.e., total 28 points are to be kept in mind for following Sanathana dharma. So, for them we have to study Samskrutha basha which is essential.

Now17th point i.e., Shodasha Samskaras.

Now I will start Shodasa samskaras, andtoday, ifpossible, Iwill cover at least three samskaras.

The words Shodasa samskaras means sixteen samskaras. According to scriptures, there are total 48 samskaras. Then 40 (Chatwaarimshath) samskaras are there according to Gauthama or Aapasthambha dharma sutras. So, 40 samskaaraas are there and it is very difficult to follow all the 40 samskaras by all human beings. One great Maharshi said, that at least 16 samskaarams are to be observed in their lives. So, these 16 samskaaraas are given in a sloka form.

Garbhadaanam, pumsavanam, seemanthonayanam thatha jaathanaamnanna Chawla mounji vratha chathushtayamgodhaanaakhyamsnaathakancha, vivaaham, paitru medikam shodashaithani karmaani samanthram kaarayeth thathaha.

These are the sixteen samskaaraas and are to be performed according to the mantras provided by the maharshis.

Garbhadaana, Pumsavanam and Seemantham, these three will be performed before the birth of the child. After the birth of the child Jaatha karma, Naamakarana, Annapraasana, Chowla karma and Upanayana by parents then, Praajapathya, Sowmya vratha, Agneya vratha, Vysyadeva vratha, Godaana vratha and Snaathaka vratha are to be performed by the Acharya and, Paanigrahanam will be performed by the parents and the last one Paithrumedhikam or Anthyeshti will be performed by the elder son born to them or by all the sons together. There are sixteen samskaaraas. This is the list given by the Gautama dharma sutras. But we follow Aapasthamba Guhya Sutras. There are certain changes in Aapasthamba Guhya Sutras. All the vratas are kept in one samskara and some other samskaaraas were added.

Now, I will explain all these samskaras in a nutshell shortly in 5 minutes and, after that I will deal with all these samskaaraas in detail one after the other.

- 1) **GARBHAADAANA SAMSKAARA**:-First we have to know what is this samskaara. The word samskaara from the daathu'Hru' means to do, with the prefix 'Sam'. Sam means samyak or properly. And Sam also means sampoorna or perfectly. So, samskaara itself means purification of our body, mind and jeeva also even before taking birth or upaadhi. It is performed after the marriage to purify the womb of the bride to make it worthy to get a good progeny to make the womb ready to conceive, by vedic mantras.
- 2) **PUMSAVANAM**:-This ritual will be performed in third month of pregnancy of the married woman with the wish of making the embryo a male child.
- 3) **SEEMANTHAM or SEEMANTHONNAYANAM**:- This is the most important one of these three rituals, which is celebrated before the birth of the child to protect the mother and the child to be born and wishing the lady a normal delivery. The Seemantham will be celebrated as a festival also which gives a lot of happiness to the pregnant lady. The above three are also called as prenatal samskaaraas. From the fourth one onwards the samskaaraas are called childhood samskaras.

4) **JAATHAKARMA**:- It starts just before the birth of the child and after the birth of the baby.

The father gives lots of daanaas or donations even before the birth of the baby since, the moment the child is born 'asoucha' will enter. Then, he will have to perform it before the child is born by saying the sankalpa and donate. And after puriti snaana on 11th day he has to do Jaatha Karma.

5) **NAAMAKARANA**:- Naamakarana means naming ceremony which will be performed mostly on the 11th day or 21st day. Along with it a Cradle ceremony will also be performed where the child is put into the Cradle.

6) **NISHKRAMANA**:- It is a ceremony where in the child will be brought out of the house for the first time to Yagna Saala and to show him nature and into Sun Light and getting him acquainted with atmosphere.

7) **ANNAPRAASANA**:- This ritual is celebrated to make the child consume solid foods (which are smooth in nature) other than the mother's milk. Normally the child will be fed with Paramannam or Paayasam, which will be administered by the father of the child with a golden ring without precious stones, on the lips or tongue of the child. Along with it the parents of the child will celebrate Vasthu Pradarshana, where in different categories of items like pen, knife, book, gold item, ball, cash and toys etc., will be kept ahead of the child, and the child will slowly crawl towards them and grab one among those items. This is celebrated for the purpose of entertainment.

8) **CHOODASAMSKAARA OR CHOWLASAMSKAARA**:- This samskaara is about removing the hair of the baby that comes to the baby by birth, for the first time.

9) **KARNAVEDA**:- This samskaara is about piercing the ears for wearing ear studs or ear rings or hangings. This samskaara will be done to both boys and girls. For girls, along with karnaveda, nose piercing will also be done.

10) **AKSHARAABHYASA SAMSKAARA**:- This samskaara is about making the child to read and write aksharas or letters or alphabet for the first time. This is the most sublime samskaara which is needed for all the human beings.

11) **UPANAYANASAMSKAARAM**:- The most sacred samskaara where, Brahmopadesa will be done to the child by the father of the child and guru, and they make the child to wear Yagnopaveetha. This samskaara brings the child to the guru, who makes him to learn the real knowledge i.e., Brahmagnana. By this, the child becomes brahmachari after wearing the Yagnopaveetha.

12) **SAMAVARTHANA OR SNATHAKA VRATHA SAMSKAARA**:- This samskara will be celebrated after the completion of education by the Sishya and the Guru should declare that the sishya completed the course of education as the final Verdict this Samaavarthana

samskaara will be performed by the guru. And in this Samaavarthana samskaram or Snaathaka vratha, the guru gives him, his final verdict and advises and gives him the final certificate of completion of the course. So, till such time the sishya will be a brahmachari and after this snathaka vratha, the guru permits the sishyato get married or enter into Gruhasthaashrama and go back to his home and stay with his parents and look them after happily.

13)GODAANA OR KESHAANTHA SAMSKAARA:- This is the samskaara performed for removing or shaving the hair on chin and lips i.e., beard and mustache of sishya, for the first time. At that time, the sishya has to donate a cow along with calf (milky cow) to his Aachaarya. That is why this keshantha samskaara is also called Godaana samskaara. Similarly, a kind of samskaara is to be performed for girl child also, when they mature or attain puberty.

14)VEDAVRATHAS:- Veda Vratas or Brahma Yagnas as we say, are to be performed before the marriage by the Guru himself. There are four samskaaras under this category, and all the four to be performed simultaneously. All these four are clubbed and performed by the guru and sishya together in four years time and, they perform some yagnas and give some daanaas to Aachaarya and others during these veda vratas. So, these yagnas are performed one in every year and the sishya or brahmachari has to observe and study these vratas or yagnas closely. After the last Vrata is performed during fourth year, the Aachaarya after satisfying the sishya's performance, he declares his sishya's education is completed and permits the sishya to leave for his home to stay with his parents and get married.

15)VIVAAHASAMSKARA:- This samskaara is also called as Marriage in English, where in a Vara and Vadhu will enter into a relationship of a lifetime to stay together and to have their progeny and to pursue their lives in reaching the ultimate goal of attaining liberation or Moksha. This vivaaha Bandham is also called Gruhasthaashrama and considered as the best among the four ashramas.

Agruhastha has to take care of Brahmacharis and Sanyasees. Whereas Vaanaprasthaas stay at vana or forest and take care of themselves with whatever is available in vanaas. The Gruhasthaashrama is most important that, in this ashrama dharma a person becomes self sufficient to keep his lineage or dynasty or vamsa which, is very important to keep his family goes on.

16)ANTHYESHTIORPAITRUMEDHKAM:- This the last samskaara to a person by his elder son or all sons together when he leaves the body. So, these shodasa samskaaras are very important in one's life and of these some are celebrated by the grand parents, some of them by parents, some by Achaaryas or Gurus and some by themselves and the last one by the sons.

And now we will know about what Samskara in detail is and about these shodasa samskaaraas a little deeper into them.

Now what is samskaara?

The word samskaaram formed from the root word "Hru" to do with the Upasarga "Sam"(Samyak). Samyak means good. Samyak karanameva samskaranam. To do good is samskaranam(Bagu cheyadam).So, samskaaram means purifying. It is removing the sins and defects that exist in Chittha.Mano, Buddhi, Ahankaara Chitta are the four which are together called as "Anthalikaarana". Chittha stores what all we did in our earlier births or lives in the form of samskaaraas. So, the chittha is to be purified by removing the sins and defects that are coming along with jeeva, they show their effects, so, when only good samskaras are carried in Chittha,this jeeva born here at present will behave in a good manner or becomes a great person. So, we have to do all these samskaras.

The word samskaara appears in Rigveda mantras and in JAIMINI POORVA MEEMAMSA SUTRAS also mention about these samskaaraas because, yagna means samskaaram only. And also, in our Aapasthamba Guhya Sutras and there are so many other dharma sutras and dharma sastras, where they speak about all these samskaaraas. The samskaaraas are the rituals related Agama Sastra. These shodasa samskaaraas are done to the jeeva starting from before the birth of jeeva that continues throughout life through several stages one after the another and ends with last samskara of Antheshti performed by the son of that person, after he leaves his body. These shodasa samskaaraas are performed only for human beings out of 84 lakhs of living beings or jeeva raasis because, the life of human beings is so great, that the human body(this Manava Upaadhi) alone is eligible or capable of attaining Moksha.So, to get liberated, one should be very pious.If, a jeevaathma gets the birth of a bird, animal, insect, tree etc., it enjoys its deeds whether good or bad.But They can never enjoy, as human beings enjoy with this upaadhi or body.

The birds, animals,trees, insects do not have the powers either to study the scriptures or to talk and express their views, unlike human beings. The animals, birds and insects are capable of making some sounds but not through words as in the case of human beings. But in our Upanishads, we can see there were some dogs which could speak and chant vedic mantras and some capable of speaking to maharshis in Samskrutha basha or language. That is really wonderful. Now these birds had never listened to the teachings or guru bodhas to elevate their souls. So, human upaadhi only has such facilities or capabilities such as, speaking, doing yagna yagas, and worshipping, doing puja etc., So, human upaadhi only is capable of attaining Moksha. So, in order to get liberated, human beings should lead a pious life. So, if a jeevaathma is born as a bird, insect,animal, or tree enjoys the results of its own good or bad deeds. But They can never enjoy like the human beings enjoy with their upaadhi.

The birds or animals or animals do not have the power either to study the scriptures or talk and express their views and ideas. They can make some sounds but not exact words , so that they can also chant the mantras. But, in our Upanishads we will come across some dogs that are capable of talking to maharshis in Sanskritlanguage and chant

vedic mantras. Now, these birds have never listened to the pravachanas, lessons or guru bodhas to elevate their souls towards liberation. So, these human beings or upaadhi have the capacity of speaking , studying and chanting vedic mantras in yagna yagas etc.,which, takes them towards liberation . But there are so many other instances where in, not only so many other creatures like birds, insects and animals which were capable of doing all these things and got liberated.

InKaala Hastheeswara Mahathyam, Sree means aSpider, Kaala means Snake or a serpent and Hasthi means an elephant. These three creatures got liberated by worshipping Lord Shiva Bhagavanand in Gajendra Moksha case also animals like elephant and crocodile both got liberated from their lives , even though they were having the animal upaadhi. As it is said “JANTHUNAM NARA JANMA DURLABHAM”, the human upaadhi is a rare one. When, we have been given that rare type of upaadhi , we have to utilize this opportunity by acquiring real knowledge and we should follow Sanatana Dharma and try to reap the fruits of our life by praying to God. So, when such a rare body is given to us , that body should be purified by these several samskaaraas and this body should be made worthy of doing all these in a proper way. So, these samskaaraas are essential to human beings.

Even before the jeeva enters the mother’s womb, these samskaaraas start and continue after taking birth and the parents perform the first three samskaaraas and afterwards the jeeva has to lead a spiritual life with proper samskaaraas and should try to lead a life for achieving Moksha or Liberation. After living full span of life, when he leaves the human body, the last or the sixteenth samskaara will be performed. So, while the jeeva is in the womb of its mother experiences the consequences of its misdeeds done in it’s previous birth. This situation is called Garbhavasa Naraka which, the jeeva feels as if, he is experiencing the Naraka(hell) baadha.

When a living creature dies and leaves the body, inorder to get human body or to take the form of a human body, it has to wait a long time to obtain this human body. It is a long process to attain the human body as described in Upanishads. That jeevaathma has to take the form of a rain drop and fall on the crop land and grow into a plant and turn into grain or dhaanya and then it should reach a worthy man’s plate,who eats it and then it should turn into veerya(semen) and enter into mother’s womb and suffering a lot in a dark congested place, floating in the water that exists in the womb and getting food from the mother, it has to grow fully and get all the limbs and body parts and brain etc., and praana shakthi should come to it and, after the process of growth occurs the jeeva will be thrown out of the womb forcibly by the air that is there in the womb. So, it is a very difficult journey. Now our shastras,puranas say, the jeeva staying in the mother’s womb prays to God, that it can not bear the sufferings anymore and laments and cries and prays to God to take himout at the earliest and it will not repeat the sins or mistakes it, committed in previous births and, says that it will follow the path shown by the God. The jeeva will remember it’s past life also while in garbham or womb of it’smother. GARBHOPANISHATH and GARUDA MAHA PURANA, they speak about different stages of the garbhastha pinda or fetus and gathis of jeeva and the result of good and bad deeds done by jeeva . The garbhastha pinda gets the food through the umbilicalcord from the mother through whatever she eats. And, when the child is born, he or she may be a Medhaavi i.e., intellectual or a great person like Shankara Bhagavathpaada or Swami Vivekananda or

may be a great soul or talented person endowed with God's given gift of great talents or he may be normal person.

Whoever may born, he should be purified by these samskaaraas only. Whoever may born, before the jeeva enters the womb of the mother, the mother's womb will be purified. So, mother's womb will be purified with vedic mantras and procedures and then, good jeeva tries to enter that pious or purified womb of the mother. Noble jeevas do not want to enter into normal wombs, which are dirty. So, we have to clean it or purify it just like whenever, we want to enter into new house to live, we will have to clean it in order to make it fit, to dwell there in it and before entering the new house, we generally perform puja to the God and thereafter only we will enter into that house.

Similarly, the jeeva also before entering, the elders in the family, should purify the womb of the would be mother, and make it pure and clean, so that a good jeevaathma can enter into her womb and born to them as their child. This is the first among the three samskaaraas, that will be done to the mother before the child takes birth. And, after the birth takes place, there will be 12 samskaaraas performed to the baby and another one, being the last one i.e, Anthyeshti will be performed by the child's son. This process of purification of the womb is called as sacramen or samskarana or samskaara. So, these shodasa samskaaraas are very important and are of great significance in human life.

The parents of the vadhu and vara i.e., The couple who, in turn become mother and father and their children are the three generations in doing or performing the shodasa samskarams in the life of a child. Actually, the Gauthama Maharshi said that there are 40 samskaaraas or Chatwaarimshath samskaraha. Some others said they are 48. Now, out of these , we are performing 16(sixteen) i.e., shodasa samskaaraas mentioned in Guhya Sutras, Aapasthamba sutras. Compulsorily, we have to perform or do all these sixteen samskaaraas, because all the Hindus are actually Sanathana Dharma Anuyayees.. They all are following these shodasa samskaaraas and there are scientific reasonsalso for performing these samskaaraas. So, whatever methods observed by our ancestors provided by maharshis in the olden days provide health and they are supported by scientific approach or vygnaanikatha also exists. All these are mixed with spiritual well-being.

So, in this modern age, people developed a lot of facilities, scientific methods and machinery which are helpful for treating people with so much ease. So, things have become easy nowadays for people. In olden days people did not have such modern facilities, and even then people used to take care of the life of every individual person and child also, at that time there were midwives or mantrasanis as they were called, used to take care of the pregnant women and the children just, what doctors and nurses are doing nowadays.

So, all these shodasa samskarams are performed to boys and girls, men and women but one or two samskaaraas specifically for boys and girls and specially for girls. So, all other samskaaraas are common just as the moon shines or endowed with sixteen(16) kalason fullmoon day we call it as shodasa kala paripurna, that means full of sixteen (16) Kalasand,Upanishads also mentioned about shodasa Kalaa purusha. All human beings are

endowed with sixteen kalas and these all exist in all of us. So, we have to be purified with shodasa samskaaraas. The one who undergoes them leads a cultured life and get the possibility of attaining liberation.

Now, what is meant by doing these samskaaraas can be understood like this, suppose a copper or brass plate or vessel or bowl fully covered by a thick layer of dirt and to clean it, we apply tamarind pulp little salt and rub it immediately with coconut coir, to get rid of that thick layer of dirt and after rubbing and washing with water, it becomes shiny. Nowadays, instead of these home remedies, people started using some powders like Peethaambaram etc., for cleansing the vessels in order to make them shine very much. Similarly, to remove the dirt or impurities of previous birth of jeevas or jeevaathmas, the upaadhis are to be purified with certain mantras and rituals, then this jeeva in this upaadhi will get physical, mental and spiritual purification. So, these shodasa samskarams are to be performed by all the human beings. They are as important as that of Varnashrama dharmas and according to Varnas, these shodasa samskaaraas vary little bit. So, these are the basic for vedic way of life. Our social life depends on these samskaaraas also.

Now, mental intentions and thoughts are very important for the development of human life. The effects of our thoughts are according to the deeds we do. The results will come according to the deeds we do. So, getting best birth and getting liberation would become possible with these samskaaraas, by observing them. Therefore, sages prescribed these rituals for the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being and purification of ourselves. It has become our custom to observe these rituals i.e., shodasa Samskaaraas and, while performing these samskaaraas we get happiness because, performing these samskaaraas as functions, and we invite our friends, relatives, and dear ones to enjoy together those happiest moments.

The greatness of these rituals is to unite all human beings and people who live in different places, they also observe the samskaaraas. So, in performing these samskaaraas all the followers of Sanathana Dharma will get together "Aasethu Himachalam" people observe them, May be with little differences the customs are there and these customs may differ from place to place as we say them praantheeya bedhaas or regional differences.

The methods we follow traditionally which are coming to us paramparagatha or hereditary paddathis are there. Even though they differ to some extent, everyone follows these samskaaraas. These samskaaraas destroy all evil in human beings and inculcate super qualities and make them meritorious and befitting to get Moksha or Liberation. Now, besides these shodasa samskaras, there are so many other samskaaraas. They say Pancha Maha Yagnas as samskaaraas and Pancha Runaas, we spoke yesterday.

Santhasoma samskaaraas are there. Sapthahaviryagnasamskaaraas are there, Sapthapaakasamskaaraas are there. These are described in all Dharma sastras. So, all these samskaraas together comes to forty(40). In Aapasthamba Guhya Sutras and Sri Hari Datta Charya Swami also spoke about shodasa samskaaraas. They said Paaka Yagna Samskaras that mean they are very precious and excellent. So, Haritha Smruthi says

that "SAMSKAARAHA DVIVIDHAHA" means samskaaraas are of two types BRAHMAWACHA and HAREETHAHA.

VividohisamskaarobhavathiBrahmo daivasyapaaka yagnaha somayaagaadayahadaiva samskaaraaha Garbhaadaanaha aadayaha Brahma Samskaaraaha.

So, that is how they are differentiated.

The following are the shodasa samskaaraas which are being followed by the people at present.

- 1) GHARBHADAANA
- 2) PUMSAVANA
- 3) SEEMANTHA
- 4) JAATAKARMA
- 5) NAAMAKARANA
- 6) NISHKRAMANA
- 7) ANNAPRAASANA
- 8) CHOODAA SAMSKAARA
- 9) KARNAVEDHA
- 10)AKSHARAABHYAASA
- 11)UPANAYANA SAMSKAARA
- 12)KESHAANTA SAMSKAARAFOR BOYS AND
BAALIKA SAMSKAARA FOR GIRLS
- 13)DEVA VRATHAS ORBRAHMA YAGNAAS(BOYS)
- 14)SAMAAVARTHANA
- 15)VIVAAHA SAMSKAARA and
- 16)ANTHYESHTI

Now, about Garbhadaana Samskara, we know in detail. This ritual is first among the sixteen or shodasa samskaaraas as we said, after the marriage is celebrated. On the fourth day night from the date of marriage, the parents of both the bride and bridegroom will get it done to the newly wedded couple. This is also called a conception ceremony or conceiving ceremony. This would be done once, in a lifetime. Actually, people get married to keep the progeny alive i.e., to have children. So, Prajai gruhamethinam for getting santhana, they get married.

So, in order to get virtuous and responsible children, who take care of parents, religion, Sanathana dharma and who take care of nation and try to liberate themselves. Such good children should be born. And also, they should pay back or repay the debts of Pithrudevatha, Pancharunaas and Deva runaas, they have to clear off the way for their forefathers to get liberated. So, to follow all this and complete the works, which was started by the father or parents, are to be completed by the sons. Such worthy sons are to be born to the parents. So, this ritual of Garbhadaana is very much essential for, wishing the would-be parents should be blessed with good santhana or worthy santhana, so, this Garbhadaana Samskara will be done to purify the womb of the bride, allowing a good

jeevaathma to enter into it and grow in such a fertile farm is called Garbhaadaana Samskaara.

Now, the sacrament or purifying the womb with the most powerful mantras which have got invisible power. Where, Mantra means "Mananath trayathaa ithi mantraha. The union of husband and wife to give birth to a child is described In Taitthareeyaupanishad in a very detailed manner as Maha Samhitha. There are five(5) MahaSamhithas and adhipragnamin this process.

MaathaPoorvarupam, pitha utthara rupam,praja sandhihi prajananagum santhaanam ithi Adhiprajam they say.

In our tradition, veda Samskruthi, even the santhana uthpatthi is treated as yagna , as a great or pious act done as a sacrifice in yagna. It is an integral part of vedic life. Now, when the minds and feelings of husband and wife come together when both are happy and willing, then their union gives birth to healthy and virtuous children. Otherwise, it may happen as it occurred in case of births of Dhritarashtra, Panduraja etc.,

Ambika closed her eyes on seeing the sage Veda Vyasa.Hence, she gave birth to a blind child(Dhritarashtra). Ambaalika shivered with fear on seeing sage Veda Vyasa and gave birth to Panduraja with congenital paanduroga. But the servant maid served sage Veda Vyasa with much devotion and confidence, so, she gave birth to Vidhura, who is considered as Maha gnaani of all time. Though she was a dasi, she gave birth to a highly genius, knowledgeable childlike Vidhura. Vidhura is famous for his Vidhura Neethi. Vidhura is famous for his authenticity for whatever he speaks. When both wife and husband love each other and have high ambitions, they will have very good children.

The priest by chanting holy and powerful mantras purify and makethe couple very powerful and bless them to get Sath Santhana. The parents also bless the couple with full love and affection to get good children and bless for their prosperity. Now, in our samskruthi and sanatana dharma, one should get married, only for getting children and there by becoming free frompithru runa. That is why the union of wife and husband is treated as the most sacred act as yagna.

