

Yoga and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life
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Yogic Perspective of Positive Events and Positive Institutions
Lecture - 21
Four Ashrams or Stations in Life

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16 Sanskaras in Light of Four Ashrams or Stations in Life



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If we look at all these Sanskar's these are related to four stages of life. Most of you must be aware that in the yogic tradition prescribed in all the Indian traditions as well, we come across this notion of classifying the stages of life, very broad classification and stages of life. There are four stages of life as being conceived: Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprasth and Sannyas. Brahmacharya is the time of studies preparing our mind and body to be the valued member of the community and society.

Grihastha is the life of householder, householders life is responsible for whole taking care of all other Sanskar's because that is the stage; where artha which is the very important which is one of the four purusharthas which we discussed in the last session. Arth is mostly created and circulated

through the grihastha ashram in the life of a householder. Where, they aim at raising family and also taking care of the society and prosperity of the society.

Third stage in life is called Vanaprastha, Vanaprastha literally means going to the forest that symbolically means delegating the responsibility and starting to delegate the responsibility of the household to the kids taking giving the responsibility of the ashrams to the younger householders, giving responsibilities of different types to the younger people.

So, that is the 3rd stage this stage is considered to be active in the society, this is about taking the role of a person who is not only performing duties, but he or she is also preparing the next generation to perform the duties in the best possible ways. So, that element of dedication, delegation contributing to society, contributing to the larger system for the benefit and development of its own, not for the personal benefit alone or not only for the benefit of the family.

These are some of these are some of the characteristics of Vanaprastha, Sannyas is the sann nyas; that means, equality and equanimity in the perception; that means, moving beyond the likes and dislikes and dedicating ourselves to the last objective of the life which is called moksha.

Moksha, we discussed in the last session that is described or explained in different languages in the different types of yogic tradition. So, Bhakti yog describes Moksh in a certain way, karma yog describes Moksh in a certain way, Gyan yog also describes Moksh in a certain way. But ultimately the objective of Sannyas ashram is to make more concerted and focused effort towards the 4th objective or 4th purushartha of life.

If we look at Sanskar the [FL] Sanskar the 16 Sanskar's these are primarily aligned to the different stages of life and these Sanskar's are primarily focused on Brahmacharya and Grihastha. There are very few Sanskra's supposed to be conducted for vanaprasthi or sannyasi.

Why so? Because by nature meaning of Sanskar is refinement or making things sophisticated this process is naturally required in the childhood and when person is young. So, if you look at Sanskar's they start from the beginning and beginning meaning even before the conception the Sanskar's process start.

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Sanskara as Positive Events: Few Examples



The **Garbhadhana Sanskara** was performed at the proper time when the couple were physically fit and in a healthy condition, when they knew each other's heart and had intense desire for possessing a child. Their whole thought was "concentrated towards the art of procreation and a pure and congenial atmosphere was produced "by means of sacrifices and recital of apt hymns.

After the **Chudakarana** or tonsure when the child grew into a boy, his duties were prescribed and his responsibilities explained before him without encumbering his mind and body with book-knowledge and school discipline.

The **Upanayana** and other educational Sanskaras formed the great cultural furnace where the emotions, desires and will of the boy were melted and, shaped and he was prepared for an austere but a rich and cultured life.

The **Vivah sanskara** was a code of eugenics and the nuptial ceremony about the life of a married couple. The various sacrifices and vows prescribed for a householder were introduced to remove selfishness clinging to one's individuality and make him realize that he was the part and parcel of the whole community.

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So, we can take few examples and the detailed discussion as I said will be conducted in a session which is primarily focused only on the Sanskar's as a positive event for managing different stages of life. So, Garbhadhan Sanskar this is performed at the proper time when couple are physically fit and in healthy condition.

When they knew each other's heart and had intense desire for possessing a child. So, when couple is psychologically and physically ready to conceive a child that is the time Garbhadhan Sanskar is conducted. Their whole thought of was to concerted towards the art of procreation and pure and congenial atmosphere was produced. So, the if you look at the mantras and the rituals they are aiming at making the thoughts and mind clear and creating a congenial atmosphere.

And that is done through different hymns different sacrifices, after Chudakaran or to ensure when child grew into a boy his duties are prescribed and his responsibilities are explained before him and that is done without encumbering his mind and body with book knowledge and school discipline. So, the Chudakaran Sanskar makes child ready to take up the larger responsibility, make the child aware that he or she is not only the child of his or her parents.

So, in this stage a child is made more conscious about his role in the family. So, Upanayan and other educational Sanskar's are formed the great cultural furnace of the emotions desires and will

of the boy. So, this description of Sanskar is given in an extensive thesis of Dr. Rajbali Pandey. So, this thesis is based on the research of Dr. Rajbali Pandey submitted in the late 40's and he describes that Upanayan and other Sanskar's form the great cultural furnace where emotions desires and will of the boy were melted and shaped and he was prepared for an austere, but a rich and cultured life.

So, all the education related Sanskar's are making the child's mind and body ready to be the valued member of society. Then comes Vivah Sanskar, Vivah was the code of eugenics that is what described in the Rajbali Pandey's book and the nuptial ceremony about the life of a married couple. So, Vivah Sanskar was a code of eugenics meaning a preparation of the healthy progeny.

And it was also a nuptial ceremony where they make the psychological contract about living together enjoying things together and who will lead in what kind of matters in the married life. The various sacrifices rituals and vows are prescribed for a house for a householder, they are introduced to remove selfishness clinging to one's individuality and make the couple both the members of the couple to realize that he or she is part and parcel of the whole community.

So, if we look the rituals in detail, they are about making each other's aware of the each other's individuality and making them willing to sacrifice the individuality, making them more open to the likes and dislikes and also making them open to plan their life which can take care of all three other ashrams. So, Grihastha ashram which has to take care of the Brahmacharya, Vanaprasth and Sannyas the whole societal arthic activities the transactional activities economic activities are all carried out by the householder.

So, preparing the new householders the preparing the couple who is entering into the marriage life for this responsibility. So, Sanskar's are the positive events where along with fun and frolic a positive message is given, that message is given in a very joyful way and that is also an occasion the whole society is participating in the process.