

Yoga and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life
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Yogic Perspectives of Positive Events and Positive Institutions
Lecture - 22
Yagna - Positive Event

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Psycho-Social Role of Sanskaras



Sanskaras as Self-expression: Householder performed the Sanskaras to express his own joys, felicitations and even sorrows at the various events of life in the shape of decoration, music, feast presents.

Cultural and Social Integration: Each sanskara had the rituals which involves all sections of society. These also provide the identity to the different sections of society.

The Moral Purpose: Gautama after enumerating -forty Sanskaras, gives 'eight good qualities of the soul,' viz., mercy, forbearance, freedom from envy, purity, calmness, right . behaviour, and freedom from greed and covetousness.

The Spiritual Purpose: It was the business of the Sanskaras to make the body a valuable possession, a thing not to be discarded, but made holything to be sanctified, so that it might be a fitting instrument of the spiritual intelligence embodied in it. It was the way in which an active life of the world was reconciled with spiritual realization.

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As a overview sanskaras have various psychosocial roles sanskaras are self expression, they are cultural and social integration mechanism, they have the moral purpose and they also have spiritual purpose. The first point is sanskaras as self expression; that means, householders perform the sanskar to express their own joy the felicitations and even sorrow at the various events of life.

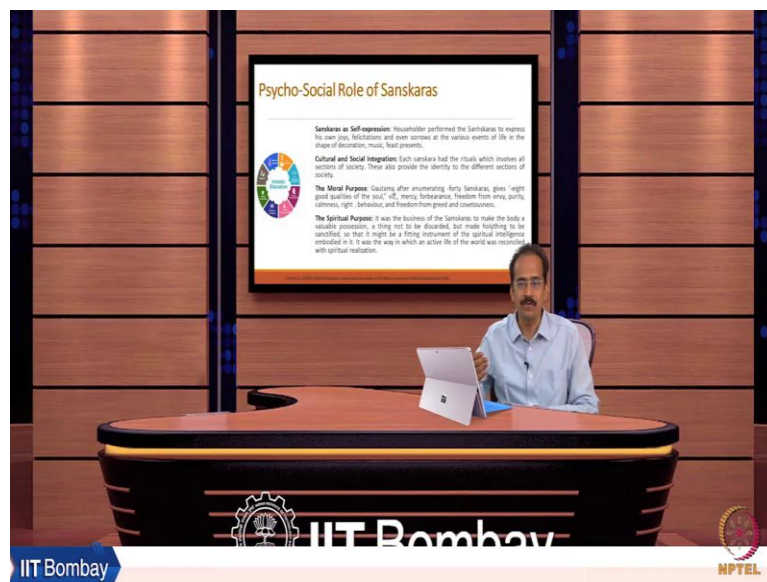
In the shape of decoration, music, feast present, different rituals these are expressions of all kinds of emotions, maybe emotions of joy when a child is born and or emotions of grief when antyeshti sanskar is done when a family member dies. So, in all aspects sanskaras are mechanism and ways of self-expression. These sanskaras have cultural and social integration function as well.

Because each sanskar had rituals which involves all sections of society. So, for example, marriage or vivah sanskar cannot be completed without the help of barbers or goldsmith or the ironsmith.

Similarly, the namkaran sanskar cannot be completed without the rule of a barber or washerman. So, like these different sections of society had different roles in most of the sanskaras and this provides a mechanism of the integration of the different sections of the society.

This also provide the identity to the different sections and this conveys the message that in the cycle of life all the sections of society are important and inevitable. Sanskaras as I briefly mentioned before also have moral purpose. So, Gautama after enumerating forty sanskaras I mentioned that Gautamas classification also includes very extensive 40 sanskaras, after enumerating all these the hymn uttered by Gautama meaning 8 good qualities of soul.

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Those qualities as mercy, forbearance, freedom from envy, purity, calmness, right behaviour and freedom from greed and covetousness. And Angira also mentions in his text that if all sanskaras are done and these 8 qualities are not inculcated then there is no value or meaning of these sanskaras. However, if sanskaras are not conducted and if somehow these 8 qualities are developed in the human being that is better than having and that is better than getting conducted all the sanskaras.

So, there is a consciousness that behind the ritual there is a moral purpose and conducting certain rituals as described in the different sanskar processes ultimately the purpose is to make a better

human life more contributing, more harmonious within as well as harmonious without harmonious with the externality and these messages are conveyed in the sanskaras.

Sanskaras also have spiritual purpose. It was the business of sanskar to make body a valuable possession. In most of the sanskaras body human body is well nourished it is decorated it is washed and body is conceived as a vehicle for the trans personal experiences and realizations.

So, body is not a thing to be discarded that message is conveyed very strongly in the sanskaric tradition in the sanskaras, but it is considered a holy thing to be sanctified so, that it might be fitting instrument of the spiritual intelligence embodied in it. So, in all the rituals we come to know about certain hymns which keep conveying the ideas of adhyatmik purpose or spiritual purpose also behind the sanskaras and it was the way in which active life of the world was reconciled with the spiritual realization.

So, if you look at these sanskaras we seek some of the very clear characteristics which are the characteristics of yogic tradition as well like yogic tradition which has body a very important instrument body is sanctified in all the sanskaras even in the Antyesti body is sanctified.

Number 2, as yog talks about the positive emotions, yog when we look at the ashtanga yog includes positive emotions, positive behaviours and spiritual purpose in the same way all sanskaras have are imbued with positive emotion, positive purpose and ultimately directed towards spiritual goals of life.

But in this process, they take care of all four purusharthas which are dharm meaning harmonious life or righteousness, expressed in the righteousness; artha which is more like physical positions or transactions; kaam which is more psychological or sensuous pleasure and moksh which is spiritual enlightenment in all sixteen sanskaras all four aspects are taken care of and that is the reflection of the integral nature of yogic tradition.

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Yajna-Positive Event: A Primer



यज्ञं व्याख्यास्यामः १ द्रव्यं देवता त्यागः २ (Katy. Shra. 1.2.2) Katayana Shrauta Sutras Yajna is composed of three elements द्रव्यं | Dravya (obligatory materials), देवता | Devata (a deity) and त्यागः | Tyaga (giving away of the materials)

पञ्च वा एते महायज्ञाः सतति प्रतायन्ते सतति संतिष्ठन्ते | देवयज्ञः पितृयज्ञो भूतयज्ञो मनुष्ययज्ञो ब्रह्मयज्ञो इति- इति ||

pañca vā ete mahāyajñāḥ samtati pratāyante satati samtiṣṭhante | devayajñaḥ pitṛyajño bhūtajño manusyayajño brahmayajño iti-; iti || Taittiriya Aranyaka

Meaning: Five of these mahayajnas are observed and completed day after day, on a daily basis. They are Devayajna, Pitruyajna, Bhutayajna, Manushyayajna and Brahmajajna.

❖ Pitra Yajna: to his parents and ancestors (for the physical body and lineage),

❖ Rishi Yajna: the rishis (for the knowledge of the Vedas),

❖ Dev Yajna: devas (for their blessings),

❖ Bhut Yajna: nature (including the animate ie. plants and animals and inanimate ie. the panchabhutas) and

❖ Manushya Yajna: fellow human beings (for their support in society).

Literally speaking, Yajna means – selfless sacrifice for noble

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So, now we will look at yajna as the positive yajna is described in a very essential manner by katyayana shrauta sutra as that involves dravyam devata tyaga. Now we will look at yajna as positive event. A simple definition of yajna given in the katyayana sutra is [FL] yajna is composed of three elements, dravya meaning obligatory material which is to be offered.

Devata to whom it is offered is loosely called deity and tyaga the process of giving away and giving away which you have rightfully earned offering that giving away that that is tyaga. So, yajnas are conducted for various purposes related to the life goals, family goals or more social goals. For the householders 5 types of yajnas are prescribed [FL] 5 types of yajna or 5 yajnas have to be observed completely and regularly satati means regularly.

What are those 5 yajnas? Dev yajna, pitryajno, bhutyajno, manushyayajno, brahmajajno iti iti; that means, these five types of yajnas have to be performed by all the householders every day pitra yajna is about taking care of your parents or fore fathers, rishi yajna is about taking care having reverence and taking forward the knowledge tradition that is called rishi yajna

Dev yajna have to be performed for the blessings of the powers which govern the nature which govern the natural powers fire, water sunlight. So, these are considered to be governed by higher powers performing yajnas for the blessings of all these higher powers. Bhuta yajna is taking care

of all the animate that is plants, animals as well as in animates which are called panchabhutas in the day to day life.

So, bhuta yajna is actually taking care of all the nature around us and manushya yajna is towards fellow human being helpful for the fellow human beings and in this way supporting the society. So, all these 5 yajnas are considered most essential yajnas of the householders. If we look at these 5 yajnas they reflect two things very prominently and that is why we can very clearly see these being positive events.

These two elements of yajnas are a systemic understanding of reality and gratitude. Systemic understanding of reality meaning the yajnas are conceived and particularly these five yajnas are conceived based on a very basic tenet that this life form or individual life form is sustained by and nourished by all other life forms.

In the Baudhik tradition it is called pratityasamutpada constant (Refer Time: 10:59) this is because that is. So, dependence of any life form or my life form on all other life forms family is depend. So, this body is dependent on family, family is dependent on community, community is dependent on the larger society, larger society is dependent on even larger society and in this way, reality is nothing life is nothing, but a graded expressions of the more and more complexity.

So, lower form can be sustained only based on the higher forms. So, that systemic understanding of reality is reflected in yoga. Secondly, there is a sense of gratitude; gratitude towards parents, teachers, higher powers, all fellow beings and whole of nature gratitude is considered one of the most important factors in the positive psychology in current times and in the form of yajna we see very simple rituals which are expression of those gratitudes.

Third aspect of yajna particularly reflected in the fifth of the pancha yajna is that the concept of systemic understanding of reality and gratitude are integrated with the normal course of action. So, they are integrated with the day to day activities of life. So, there are rituals like when food grain is harvested some part is left for the birds when food grain is processed some part is given to the cow or dog or crow some part is given to the ends like these at all stages of the preparation of food there is element of sacrifice for different life forms.

So, sacrifice is essential nature of yajna literally speaking yajna means selfless sacrifice for the noble purpose. Anything which is done for the higher purpose anything which is done for the larger system is called yajna and when this is performed it is not doing any favour it has to be done because that is the only mechanism of life.

If you look at plants, rivers, birds and if we look at their contribution in the ecosystem, they naturally contributed much more than what they get from the nature, but their contribution is done as per the part of the natural programming. They do not have to think much about how they do or do not contribute, they are natural part of the system and that contribution is naturally done human being have the discriminatory power.

So, they have to consciously put in effort to contribute towards society and contribute towards the larger ecosystem. So, because of the discriminatory power human beings have more responsibility. Responsibility is connected to the consciousness because consciousness is must to make a discrimination, distinction and for enhancing the consciousness we require sanskars and yajna.

So, if we look at the whole life programming, it is deeply arising from the sense of responsibility of human being towards larger social and natural environment. Inherent in the sense of responsibility is also recognition of human power to be a destructive force or force for disturbance in the nature.

So, arising from the sense of responsibility we see in the yogic tradition many sanskars being identified which are systematic intervention to make a person a responsible member of the society and responsible member of the whole ecosystem. Yajna is a process of delivering that responsibility. Yajna is the process of performing that responsibility in a day to day activities that is why yajna and sanskars are clubbed as positive events.