

the sun, the fire, the air, the energy currents, the universal intelligence. The prayers are for the communication, through the mother, of all these energies and for assimilation of all these by the foetus. then a safe and painless delivery is prayed for. The delivery should be alongwith the embryo sheath, because, otherwise, the life of the child and the mother both can be in danger. Punsatva' or vital energy is the secret of life. If one lacks 'punsatva', one is sterile, and sterility means that the doors of further life are closed. Thus the birth of a child is an event, a very very important event, in a long long process of human generation and continuity, and this continuity ought to be healthy, intelligent, virtuous, and prosperous in the total system of a living, breathing, cosmic organism whose cells are all the creatures and whose Soul is God.

Shanti Ahuti : Having offered the above ahutis, offer santi-ahuti and then three purnahutis of completion :—

ॐ सर्व वै पूर्णं स्वाहा ।।

Om sarvam vai purnam svaha ।।

2

Punsavana (Invigoration) Ceremony

While the child is in the mother's womb, its development can be controlled. Both the body and the mind of the child can be made to develop in the direction the parents want. After birth, the older the child grows, the less it is subject to control by the parents. The mothers who regret the uncontrollable and misdissected growth of children cry, as if, over spilt milk. They failed when the time was theirs. While something is in the process of shaping, it is plastic, and it can be given the form you want. Once the form has been finally given, it is sealed.

In vaidic culture, human life is regarded as full, intelligent and planned. therefore the vedas prescribe a hundred year plan of life for every individual. Every one should be physically, mentally and spiritually fit. person who are physically and mentally unfit and handicapped are not first-rate assets, they are liabilities to society. hence planning starts even before conception, and during conception and expectancy special care has to be taken of the child growing in the womb of the mother.

During conception and expectancy, the child grows in two dissections : physical and mental. For the physical growth of the child, the Punsavana Sanskara is performed. For the mental growth of the child, the Simantonnayana Sanskara is performed. One can be called the Invigoration ceremony, and the other we may call the In-mentation ceremony.

The time for Punsavan Sanskara is the second or third month of the conception. Once it is known that conception has taken place, the mother and the father ought to observe complete sexual abstinence. They must preserve their vitality, they must not have any sexual relation until after the birth of the child and until the next child is wanted. This is Svami Dayanand's view of family planning. This Sanskara is, as if, an announcement of, and preparation for the new arrival. As already said, it should be performed in the second or third month of the conception, and before the foetus starts movement in the womb.

In this ceremony, after the normal yajana, two special ahutis have to be given with two mantras "Om a te garbho.....etc." After this, in private, the husband should put his hand on his wife's heart and chant the mantra 'Om yatte susime.....etc.' Then all should sing Sama arcika and mahavamadevya hymns. After the assembly should disperse.

Why does the husband touch the heart of the expectant mother? It is significant. It symbolizes the husband's commitment of his love to his wife. The husband binds himself in pledge to his wife, meaning that he will never neglect or hurt his wife. In addition, both the husband and the wife commit themselves to the growth and welfare of the new arrival.

After the ceremony, a few drops of new banyan leaves juice, mixed with fine giloya powder should be put in the right nostril of the expectant mother. The mother should not throw the juice out by spitting, she should rather swallow it. Then the husband should chant two mantras "Om Hiranya-garbhah....ect.", put his hand on the womb of the expectant mother and chant the mantra "Suparno'asi.....ect.

Maharsi Dayanand has prescribed important care and caution for the expectant mother. She should be regular in her habits, take proper and nourishing diet, she should be careful in her movement, and keep good cheerful company. She should take giloya, Brahma and Saunth with milk in measured quantity. She should avoid excessive sleep, too much speaking, too salty, sour, acidic, bitter and spicy and laxative foods because these upset the system.

Hints on Mother-care

Susruta, a famous ancient Indian scholar of health and medicine advises:—

Sutra 70 : During the first month of pregnancy the mother should take milk, cooled properly and mixed with herbal tonics. In the morning and evening she should take regularly nourishing non-exciting meals.

Sutra 71 : During the second month the mother should be given milk with herbal tonics, such as properly boiled with the milk. During the third month, she should be given milk with two spoonfuls of honey and one spoonful of ghee. The ghee and honey should not be in equal quantity. In the fourth month she should take milk with 10-12 grs. of fresh butter. In the fifth month she should take milk with ghee. In the seventh month she should take milk with raisins, and ghee.

Sutra 73 : In the eighth month she should take barley pudding with ghee, or sip barley soup with ghee from time to time.

Toward the end of the pregnancy, constipation must be avoided. So help the bowels, she should take some 'gulkand,' a preparation of rose-petals and honey/sugar.

All this mother care is part of the child's prenatal care. The mother's thoughts, words, movements, company, everything should be good, and proper.

Mother-care and child care is a part of family planning. And family planning is a part of national planning. It was to in ancient India. Else what is the use of unplanned population growth?

Cautionns for the mother

In **Carak Sanhita**, a famous ancient Indian work on health and medicine, mentions a number of food and precautions for the expecting mother. All these are for the growth and protection of the foetus. Without protection, even miscarriage can take place. For example, in sutra 40, if the mother sits in a squatting position, steps suddenly on high or low ground, sits on a hard seat, delays or prevents evacuation, undergoes hard work, takes too hot or sharp foods or drinks, and remains hungry for long, the growth of the foetus stops and these is even the danger of miscarriage.

Sutra 41 : Miscarriage can take place if a blow is received, if the foetus suffers pressure, if the mother suddenly sees unusual sights such as a deep pit, a well, a hill, a fearsome scene, if she travels in a jolting carriage, hears a stunning noise or untoward news. If the mother lies supine, that is, on the back for a very long time, the feeding bu connected to the navel of the foetus is likely to stangle its neck, and the result can be death of the foetus.

Sutra 42 : If the mother sleeps or goes about naked, the child be insane. If the mother indulges in abuses and quarrels, the child can be epileptic. If she indulges in sex, the child can be sexy and intemperate. If she is subjected to fear and sorrow, the child could be weak and timid and may have a short span of life. If she thinks of ill-gotten wealth, the child will be envious, lazy, thievish, inimical and evil minded. If she keeps feeling angry, the child will be peevish, deceitful, malicious, and back-biting. If she sleeps too much, the child will be slow, dull-witted and weak in digestion. If she drinks, the child will be unsteady and intemperate. If she takes too much of sweets, the child could be prone to diabetes. If she eats too sour things, the child may have some skin

disease. If she eats excess of salt, the child may grow grey early. If she eats too hot and spicy things, the child could be weak, lack virility, and may even be impotent or barren. If she eats too bitter things, the child could be dry of skin and weak in body.

Sutra 44 : Just as the character and behaviour of the mother reflects in the child, similarly if the father behaves the same way, his semen is affected and the quality of the semen reflects in the child. Therefore it is essential that the father and the mother help their health of body and mind intact and control their food and habits properly in order to beget a child of healthy body and mind.

At another place it is said that the expectant mother should remain cheerful and happy, should wear pleasing clothes and ornaments, be peaceful at heart, with everyone well, and should do good to the old and the wise. She should not touch anything dirty, distorted, offensive or repulsive. She should not hear anything disturbing or agitating. She should shun dry, stale or putrified foods. She should keep away from the cremation or burial ground, avoid fits of anger, shouting, etc. and should not stay or sleep under the shade of trees. In short, she should avoid all those things which are likely to hurt, harm or damage the foetus.

The Caraka Samhita says : Don't take any thing intoxicating. Eat no meat, fish or egg. Avoid whatever is distasteful. The effect of the health of the mother is so deep on the child that, according to Sarirasthana 3-16, if for any, disease, a part of the mother's body is injured or bruized, the same part of the child's body gets affected.

Punsavan : The Ritual Part

(Appointment of Priests and the yajna-beginning)

While beginning the Sanskara, first of all the priests have to be appointed (see p.31). the priest should sit west of the Vedi, facing east. The yajaman should sit south of the vedi facing north. The wife should sit on the husband's right.

After the appointment of the priest, the Acamana (three sips of water) should be done (see p.32). Them anga-sparsa) touching organs of the body) should be done (refer to p.33). Them chant the prayer mantras, svasti-vacana and Santi-prakarana (p.4).

Them either the yajamana or the priest should arrange the samidhas (firewood) in the kunda, start the fire (agnyadhana p.34), help the flame (agni-

pradipana p.35), place three samidhas (Samidhadhana p.35), and thus start the yajna. Them the sprinkling of water around the kunda (gola-sincaw) should be done with 'Om aditi' anumanyava, etc. (p.38).

Then follow four agharavajya-bhagahuties (p.39) :

ओम् अनये स्वाहा ॥ इदमनये इदन्न मम ॥
(North side)

ओम् सोमाय स्वाहा ॥ इदम् सोमाय इदन्न मम् ॥
(South side)

ओम् प्रजापतये स्वाहा ॥ इदम् प्रजापतये इदन्न मम् ॥
(Centre)

ओम् इन्द्राय स्वाहा ॥ इदमिन्द्राय इदन्न मम् ॥
(South side)

Om agnaye svāhā ॥ Indamagnaye idanna mama ॥
(North Side)

Om somāya svāhā ॥ Idam somāya idanna mama ॥
(South Side)

Om prajāpatāye svāhā ॥ Idam prajāpatāye idanna mama ॥ (Centre)

Om Indrāya svāhā ॥ Idamindrāya idanna mama ॥
(Centre)

After this follow four vyahti ahutis with

ओम् भूरनये स्वाहा ॥ इदमनये इदन्न मम् ॥ ect.

Om bhūragnaye svāhā ॥ Idamagnaye idanna mama ॥ etc.
(See p.....)

Them there is one silent Prajapati ahuti—

ओम् प्रजापतये स्वाहा ॥ इदं प्रजापतये इदन्न मम् ॥

Om Prajāpatāya Svaha ॥ Idam Prajāpatāye idanna mama ॥

After this, there is one vistakrt ahuti (See p.....)

ओम् आ ते गर्भो योनिमेतु पुमान् बाण इवेष्टुधिम ॥

आ वीरो जायतां पुत्रस्ते दशमास्यः स्वाहा ॥
अथo 3, 23, 2.

Om ā te garbho yojimetū pumān bāṇa iveṣudhim ॥

ā viro jāyatām putrastē dasamāsyah Svāha ॥ Att. 3, 23, 2.

O fortunate one, may your virile foetus be firm and secure in your womb just as an arrow is secure in the quiver. May it be born in the tenth month (after full maturity).

ओम् अग्निरेतु प्रथमो देवतानां सोऽस्ये प्रजां मुञ्चतु मृत्युपाशात् ॥

तदयं राजा वरुणोऽनुमन्यतां यथेयं स्त्री पौत्रमघं न रोदात् स्वाहा ॥

Om agniraitū prathamō devatānām so'asyai prajāṃ muncatu
mṛtyu-pāśat,

tadayam rājā varuṇo' anumanyatām yatheyam stri pautram-
agham na rodāt svāhā ॥
Man. Br. I, I, 10. Ash. I, 13, 6.

Let us invoke the Lord, Agni, the adorable, the first among the highest in creation. May the Lord bless the offspring of this expectant mother with life by countering the fear of death. May the Lord and the King of men help! May this mother and the child never suffer pain! May they have enough energy and vigour for a safe delivery!

Significance :—In this mantra, the word Varuna has been used for the king, i.e., the ruler. The ruler is appointed by the wish of the people. It is significant that the ruler too is invoked and enjoined to look after the welfare of the family through mother-care. The point is that family planning and welfare is not merely a private domestic affair. It is a part of the duty of a welfare state as well. The word 'Agni' has been used for the Universal ruler of the creation. The significance is that vital heat and energy are essential for health and no mother or child should come to grief for want of energy and vitality. The prayer is for birth and life and against child mortality.

The Husband touches the heart of the expectant mother

After the two ahuties have been given as above, the husband touches the heart of the expectant mother. This is done by retiring momentarily from the assembly. While touching the wife's heart, the husband chants the following :—

ओम् यत्ते सुस्रीमे हृदये हितवन्तः प्रजापतो ।

मयेऽहम् मां तद्विद्वासः माहं पौत्रमघं नियाम् ॥

Om yatte susime hrdaye hitevāntaḥ prajāpatāu ।

many'e'aham mān tadvidvānsaḥ māham pantrām-agamniyām ॥

Ash. I, 13, 7.

O darling with beautiful hair, I know that the baby is well entrenched in your heart (which feeds it with blood and emotion), I know it well. May I never face any pain or sorrow on account of this child of ours.

The significance—There can be three causes of child mortality or of foetus death : the woman herself for her weak health or carelessness, the father with his neglect of ignorance and the welfare services of the state. This prayer guards against all these eventualities. The last mantra invokes agni and Varuna, the natural elements for energy and the social system for care and service. In this mantra, it is said that the child receives nourishment from the mother's heart, and the father promises to look after the mother and child in full knowledge that full responsibility. All the three, the father, the mother and the social system should look after the welfare of the child—The coming child is a sarved trust of the three.

The Conclusion and song

After touching to the heart, the husband and wife rejoin the assembly. There are three concluding ahutis with

ओम् सर्वं चै पूर्णकं स्वाहा ॥

Om servam vai purṇam svāhā ॥

Then all should times Mahavamedevya gana from the Samaveda (with Om bhur-bhuvah-svah ॥ kaya.....etc. p.....). The yajamana (host) should entertain the assembly with appropriate hospitality and the assembly should disperse.

Afteter the Dispersal

This husband should put a few drops of the juice of new banyan leaves with giloya () powder in the right nostril of the expectant mother. Then he should chant the following two mantras :—

ओम् हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे भूतस्य जातः पतिरेक आसीत् ॥

स दाधार पृथिवीं पामुतेमां कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥ यजु० १३, ४.

Om hirṇyagarbhaḥ samavartatāgre bhūtasya jataḥ patirekā asit ।
sa dādihāra pṛthivim dyāmudemām kasmai devāya haviṣa vidhema ॥

Yaj. 13, 4, 4.

Physical—before creation, the cosmos was in the embryonic form of an egg. It was so beautiful and golden. The creator and the sustainer of this cosmos was the Lord, the Only One. The Egg exploded into space, the heavenly bodies such as the sun, the stars, the earth and the moon. The One Lord held and holds these together. he was the father. We invoke him and worship Him. He is the creator. He is the giver of off-spring, May he bless us!

The Significance :—Procreation is a part of creation. The father and mother sustain and extend the manifestation of creation from the primordial egg. The child in the womb, when it is conceived, is in the form of an egg. Hence the Lord of physical creation is invoked. In the case of the child, the mother holds the egg and the father has the responsibility to look after the mother. The Lord created the earth and the sky. In Indian literature, the mother is compared to the earth, and the father to the sky. Hence just as the sky, through heat, light and rain, and the earth, through production and nourishment, sustain the Lord's creation, so should the father and the mother sustain this mini-creation and little sweet world of the home.

ओम् अद्भ्यः संभूतः पृथिव्यै रसाच्च विश्वकर्मणाः समवर्तताग्रे ।
तस्य त्वष्टा विदधद्रूपमिति तनमर्त्यस्य देवत्वमजानमग्रे ।

यजुं ३१, १७. पारो १, १४, २.
**Om adbhyaḥ sambhūtaḥ pṛthivyai rasacca visvakarmanah sa-
mavartatāgra ।**
**tasya tvastā vidadhadrūpam eti tanmartyasya devatvamajān-
amagre ।।**

In the first mantra, there is description of the creation of the world of inanimate matter. This mantra describes the creation of living beings, specially man, from the embryo surrounded by life-forming liquids. The Lord Visvakarma surrounds the embryo with living waters, develops and sustains the foetus on those waters, and produces the multiple forms of living beings. Of these is man, subject to birth and death, but capable of rising to devatva, i.e., goldly qualities. Hence the prayer to Hiranagarbha and Visvakarma, the Lord Creator of the world and man.

Thought on yathe Susime :—Hence the mantra **Yatte Susime** is important. This mantra is spoken to the wife by the husband in private, in perfect confidence. He addresses her as “The lady of the beautiful locks”. There is perfect love between the two. Hence he says that he knows she holds the child and feeds it with the flame of love from her heart. He too promises to nurse the mother and the child. The child is thus the promise of their love and their future.

Thoughts on Hiranyagarbha and Adbhyaḥ Sambhūtaḥ :

The first mantra speaks of the creation of an egg, sustained by the Lord Creator. The mother should not think that it is something small and negligible, the Lord God Himself sustained the Golden Egg, and that very egg burst into the sun and the stars and the earth and the moon. The foetus is a god-given gift. It must be held, cared for, nursed. The mother is great as she holds an important trust of God. Every great man or woman was once in the womb. The mother brought him or her into the world. Had she been negligent, the world would have been deprived of a great soul, Great thinkers and wisemen were also once born, we owe their existence to their mothers and fathers. The mother should realize her great and sacred trust. The child is a sacred charge.

In the other mantra it is said that the Lord God Visvakarma Himself created all the living beings from one egg. The child too is conceived as an egg. The mother and the father, thus, hold the egg, nourish the foetus, bring forth the child, and bring it up—They do all this by the will and command of God.

Thus, while the child is a sacred trust, the father and mother are sacred trustees. Marriage, home, family, is a great and holy institution.

The father to bless the foetus

The father should go in private to the expectant mother, put his hand on the womb and chant the following mantra :—

सुपर्णोऽसि गरुत्सोऽस्त्रिवृते शिरो गायत्रं चक्षुर्वृहदथन्तरे पक्षौ ।

रत्नोमऽआत्मा छन्दांस्यङ्गानि यजुषि नाम ।

साम ते तनूर्वामदेव्यं यज्ञायज्ञियं पुच्छं शिष्याः शफाः ।

सुपर्णोऽसि गरुत्साम् दिवं गच्छ स्वः पत ॥ यजुं १२, ४, पारो १, १४, ५.

Darling child, soul in the womb, may you fly high like a bird on beautiful wings! Hold your head high in the world with the virtues of knowledge, will and worship of the Lord! May you know and see things in the spirit of the sacred Gayatre! In action, you may fly like the eagle on the wing, like a master on the wheels of a ratha (car). May the love and worship of God be instilled deep in your heart your body and its organs are the hymns of Yajurveda, they are songs of the Samaveda, may the plenty of mother earth bless you for the performance of the best works and yajnas throughout life. May your legs carry you to high places of success and peace. Dear child, fly on the wings to the heights of heaven and enjoy in full the gift of life on earth!

Significance :— Could there be anything more to wish for? The child in the womb is compared to a bird on the wing, healthy, beautiful, virtuous, successful, happy and bright, flying where he likes, enjoying what he likes— like the skylark of the great nature poet wordworth's :

Type of the wise who soar but never roam,

True to the kindred points of heaven and home.

Rearing a child is a sacred act performing God's commandment. And life is beautiful, full, intelligent, pious according to plan a plan, which is Divine as well as human.

Thoughts on “Suparno’asi” Mantra :—

This hymn is very comprehensive in meaning. It points to the vaidic ideal of life's fullness and the sanctity of the institution of marriage and family.

1. It is said that the human being should be healthy, handsome, happy and free like a bird. His field of action is the whole earth. Like a bird with beautiful wings, man should be fully healthy, handsome and vigorous. He must not suffer from any handicap. Just as a bird flies freely and

- enjoys its freedom on the earth and in the sky, so should man freely move around on the whole earth.
2. Divine knowledge is like the eye of the spirit. Just as the eyes guide the human being in all the movements, so does knowledge guide the soul in all actions.
 3. Knowledge has three aspects, then only it is full and complete. These aspects are : knowledge of things from matter to God; action, i.e., knowledge of right action and the will to act according to knowledge. knowledge without action is lame. The third aspect is the end of knowledge and action, that is hapiness, bliss and the communion will God. Such a person ultimately joins in Union with God.
 4. Divine music of Samaveda is like the inner eye and inner compass. One who acquires it lives in the presence of God and transmits that bliss to others.
 5. Rgveda presents the soul of knowledge, the essence of the knowledge of nature, society and God.
 6. Yajurveda contains the knowledge of when and how to do. It is compared to the hands, the organs of action.
 7. Samaveda offers divine music. It is like the region of the heart, the seat of joy.
 8. Yajna is like the tail of the bird. The tail controls the bird's direction in flight. Similarly, the spint of service should guide man in all his actions.
 9. Legs are the carriers. They should carry the man to positions of honour and service.
Covering the knowledge, action and service (worship and dedication) path of life and comparing the body of the human being to a bird's the hyman is a song of prayer and benediction. The mother and father, then, should bring forth the child as an act in the service of God and mankind. The mother should be careful, and she should be looked after. She must not suffer any bodily or mental injury. A happy and healthy mother brings forth a healthy and happy baby. Any handicap of the mother affects the health of the child.

3

Simantonnayana Sanskara (The Intellection ceremony)

Critical Part

The Punsavan Sankara is for the physical growth of the child. The Simantonnayana Sankara is for the mental growth of the child. the purpose of the ceremony also is the health and happiness of the expectant mother, and the stability and growth of the foetus. May the child grow as the moon of the brightfortnight—That is the purpose of the prayer.

Various authorities on the subject say that the time for this ceremony is the fourth, sixth or eighth month of the pregnancy. The day ought to be one when the moon is in conjunction with a nakshatra, i.e., in a mansion with a male name in the light half of the month.

Why should the ceremony be performed in the fourth, sixth or the eighth month?

We get the reply from Susruta. He writes in the Sarira Sthana :

पञ्चमे मनः प्रतिबुद्धितरं भवति । षष्ठे बुद्धिः ।

सप्तमे सर्वाङ्गप्रत्यङ्ग विभागः प्रव्यक्ततरः ।

अष्टमेऽस्थिरीभवति ओजः ।

तत्र जातः चेन्न जीवेत् निरोजस्त्वात् ।

Pāñcame manah pratibuddhataram bhavati । Śaṣṭhe buddhiḥ ।

Saptame sarvāṅga-pratyāṅga vibhāgaḥ pravṛyaktatarah ।

Aṣṭama' asthirē bhavati ojah । tatra jataḥ cenna jivet nirojastvat ।

Meaning :—In the fifth month, there is fast growth of the mind, in the sixth the intellect, in the seventh the various parts of the body and the brain, in the eighth the essential vitality which is yet unstable. Hence one born in the eighth month may not survive.

This ceremony should be performed in one of these three months. In the fourth months, the cells of the brain start growing. In the sixth starts the growth of the intellect. In the eighth, the body system, mind, intellect and heart, all these are developed, although they have of to attain to the survival degree of vitality.