DHARMA BINDU

Essence of Dharma Shastra

Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah

(Dharaṃa protects those who protect it)
Other Scripts by same Author

Essence of Puranas:-
Maha Bhagavata, Vishnu Purana, Matsya Purana, Varaha Purana, Kurma Purana,
Vamana Purana, Narada Purana, Padma Purana, Shiva Purana, Linga Purana,
Skanda Purana, Markandeya Purana, Devi Bhagavata, Brahma Purana, Brahma
Vaivarta Purana, Agni Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Nilamatha Purana,
Shri Kamakshi Vilasa

Dwadasha Divya Sahasra naama:
a) Devi Chaturvidha Sahasra naama: Lakshmi, Lalitha, Saraswati and Gayatri
b) ChaturvidhaShiva Sahasra naama: Linga-Shiva-Brahma Puranas and Maha Bharata
c) Trividha Vishnu and Yugala Radha-Krishna Sahasra naama-Padma-Skanda-Maha Bharata-and Narada Purana

Stotra Kavacha-A Shield of Prayers

Purana Saaraamsha

Select Stories from Puranas

Essence of Dharma Sindhu

Essence of Shiva Lingarchana

Essence of Amaranath Yatra

Essence of Paraashara Smriti

Essence of Pradhana Tirthas

Essence of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

Essence of Chhandogya Upanishad

Essence of Aitareya Upanishad

Essence of Katha Upanishad, Essence of Isha Upanishad (Awaiting release)

[Note: All the above Woks released on www. Kamakoti.org/news as also Google;]
Foreword

During my recent opportunity to pay personal respects to HH Vijayendra Sarasvati of Kanchi Mutt, he emphasised the significance of ‘Dharma Prachaara’ or propagation of Virtues, highlighting the fundamental tenets of Hindu Dharma. While the core of thought in this perspective is strong enough—despite the abrasions of values in the contemporary Society—yet one might still not be comfortable with the knowledge of the principles, let alone the methodologies involved in observing them. He therefore instructed me to narrate a brief on Dharma and even suggested a Title called ‘Dharma Bindu’. The scope and purpose of such a script has to be necessarily authenticated by Great Maharshis and Illustrative Original Works gifted down to us through generations. He handed over book named ‘Samkshepa Dharma Shastram’ by Dr. Gudipati Lalitha which was edited from Original Sanskrit Shlokas into Telugu, and instructed me follow the pattern and suitably edit so as to reach and suit a far larger readership in English for release vide www.kamakoti.org/news.

Indeed, some of the basic principles are no doubt familiar to the general public in India due to one’s own Societal customs and practices, but non-clarity of thought and hesitation to practise even the well known ideals are due to the cover of semi-awareness and partial ignorance. Authoritative support of Vedas as explained by Sages should be able to clear the ash-like cover of the Fire of Knowledge. Hence this attempt to edit some of the tenets of Vedic Dharma to assist and guide in our contemporary lives.

Commencing from ‘Kaala Prakarana’ or the Time Module covering Kshana-Dina-Tithi-Vaara-Paksha-Maasa-Samvatsara- Yuga-Kalpaadi cycle, Dharma Bindu seeks to deal with Varnashrama Dharmas especially of Dvijas; Rudiments of Dharma as applicable to one and all including house holders and women; followed by Ahnika Dharmas dealing in detail with Achaara-Vyavaharas or Cusoms as applicable to specified duties of all; ‘Asouchaashoucha’ Dharmas or Principles of ‘Bhahyaantara Shuchi’ or Physical and Mental Purity of Thought and Action.; Shraddha Prakarana detailing duties to the Departed Ones to redeem their Souls and to bestow blessings to us, and finally on Prayaschitta Dharmas or Regulation of Atonements of Lapses of Dharma-acharana or Practice of Virtue and Justice.

With the blessings of HH Vijayendra Sarasvati, two scripts of the same wavelength of Dharma, viz. Essence of Dharma Sindhu and Essence of Paraashara Smriti, had already been released vide the afore-mentioned website. Dharma Bindu in the series on Dharma is the latest, at the express instruction of HH; I am indeed ever grateful to him for the confidence reposed in me.

VDN Rao
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Karmanyevaadhikaaraste maaphaleshu kadaachana, maa karmaphala heturbhuh maa te sangostva karmani/ (You have the liberty only to perform the duties as prescribed and have no control over the fruits of the works and hence do not neglect the responsibilities since the fruits shall be reaped as per the Nature’s Laws!) - Bhagavad Gita; Saankhya Yoga, Chapter Two, Stanza 47.

Kaala prakarana

Atha Kaalo nirupyate sacha karmanyanga bhutah/ Tithinakshatra vaaraadi saadhanam punyapaapayo pradhanaagunabhevena nasvaattantrena tekshamaah/ (It is only on the basis of kaalamaana- tithi- vaara-nakshatras that the executed deeds bear fruits and on their own the results are not accrued. Kaala maana or the measure of Time as defined by Gargya is that one eye-flap is a ‘nimesha’, two nimeshas make a ‘triti’, two tritis one ‘lava’, two lavas one ‘kshana’, ten kshanas one ‘kaashtha’, thirty kaashthas one ‘, thirty kalas one ‘muhurta’, thirty muhrthas one ‘aho ratras’. ‘Tithi-Paksha Swarupa’ or the days and fortnights are stated as follows: Raveendoryoga varahau kramaaddarsh a Purnimaa, Kalaa pravesa niryaanaah tidhayonyaascha pakshayoh/ (The formation of Shukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha occurs as per the union and disunion of Surya Chandras respectively and the fortnight from Amavasya till Chaturdashi is the former bright phase while that from Purnima to Chaturdashi is the waning and dark phase of Chandra.) Sarvaahyetaascha tithiyah udayaadudaya sthitaah, Shuddha iti vinischeyaashashthi naadayohivaitithih/ Khanda Tithis, reckoned as from Sun Rise to Sun Set, are stated as ‘Suddha’ and are as clean, for performing any actions; each of these Tithis comprises six ‘naadis’. Each Tithi has three characteristics: Kharvaadarvaa tathaa himsraah trividham tithilakshanam, Dharmaadharma vashaadeva tithisraithhaa vivartate/ (There are three ‘kharva’, ‘darva’ and ‘himsra’ as per the intensity-mix of Dharma and Adharma. Also there are two kinds of ‘Viddhas’, ie the day preceding Amavasya and the one following dviteeya day. Now the Kaala Nirnaya or the determination of Vedha analysis: Shuddha viddhaa tithishuddhaa heena tithaanayakahani, Udaye purvayaa tithyaa vidhyate hitimurtakaah/ Saayamottaraya yaatadvayunayaatuna vidyate, Vedhyaapi trimuhurtaiva nanyunaavedhamarhatih/(Vedha is defined if during the day time there are two tithis at Sun set and Sun Rise and the difference is of three muhrtas and not otherwise; the Viddha at the Sun rise is Purva Vidda and at the time of Sun set, it is called Para or Uttara Viddha. Based on the Viddhas, one has to determine the Prathamaadi Tithi nirnayas).

[ In ‘saamanya paribhasha’ or ordinary usage, there are Purna Tithis and Sakhanda Tithis. PurnaTithi is called what obtains upto sixty ghadis after Sun Rise. Sakhanda Tithi is what obtains less than that time. Akhanda is divided in two parts viz. Shuddha and Viddha. Shuddha is the period time occurring from Sun Rise to Sun Set; however on ‘Shiva Ratri’, the time from Sun Rise to Midnight is noted as Shuddha Khand. Now, the term ‘Vedha’ is the protrusion of one tithi into another and there are two kind of Vedhas viz. Praatah Vedha and Saayam Vedha. The duration from Sun Rise upto six ghadis later is called ‘Praatar Vedha’ and the subsequent six ghadis after Sun Set and before the commencement of the next
tithi is called ‘Saayam Vedha’. But in respect of certain Tithis, the Vedha is of longer duration; for instance, Shashthi’s Panchami Vedha is of twelve ghadis; Ekadashi’s Dashami Vedha is of fifteen ghadis; Pouranami’s Chaturdashi Vedha is of eighteen ghadis. Further Vedha is applicable to different Karmas as they could be ‘Nishiddhaas’ or ‘Graahyas’ or acceptable or not. In any case, application of approval of a Karya is clear on Sampurna or Shubha tithis. Karmas are of Daiva or Pitravya.

Having briefly mentioned of the basics as above, the details are: Samvatsara-Ayana-Ritu-Maasa-Vaasara or details of the Time Cycle Units of the Sixty Years- Two Ayanas-Six Seasons-Twelve Months- and Seven Days are relevant; the Chandra or Saura Varshas; the Tithis of Prathama- to Amavasya or Prathama to Purnima respectively and the months of Chaitra-Vaishakha-Jyeshtha-Ashadha-Shravana-Bhadrapada-Ashviyuja- Kartika- Margashira-Pushya- Maagha-Phalgunas. The months coincide approximately with March to February totalling 365 days. Ritus or Seasons approximately coincide with Chaitra-Vaishakha or end March to the last weeks of May when festivals like Ugadi, Shri Rama Navami, and Vaishakhhi are celebrated. Greeshma Ritu or Summer during April-July during Jyeshtha-Ashadha when festivals like Ratha Yatra and Guru Purnima are observed and Dakshinayana or the Solar downtrend commences. Varsha Ritu or monsoon coincides with Shrvana-Bhadrapadas or the last portions of July-September when Mangala Gauri and Vara Lakshmi Vratas, Raksha Bandhan, Krishna Ashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi and Onam are celebrated. Sharad Ritu or Autumn Season coinciding with Ashvin-Kartika months extending portions of September to November being mild weather the famed Sharannava Ratri and Depaavali are celebrated. Hemanta Ritu or pre-winter Season coinciding with Margaseersha and the last days of November-January, the festivals of Vasanta Panchami, Shiva Ratri and Holi are observed; and finally Shishira Ritu or winter coinciding with Maagha-Phalgunas months during the last quarter of January to March is the time of Vasanta Panchami, Shiva Ratri and Holi. The Chandra maana procedure varies in the sense that the cycle of Seasons starts from the first day of Chaitra commencing from Ugadi.

Tithi Nirmayas:

The norms of determining Thithis from Prathama to ‘Pancha Dashi’ or Purnima/Amavasya as per Krishna Paksha, the Dark Fortnight commencing the Prathama from Amavasya in the ascending order while Chandra or Shukla Paksha commencing from Purnima to Amavasya as the case that may be are detailed: Prathama Tithi nirmaya: Shukla pakshe darsha viddhaa Krishny viddhaa dviteeyayaa, Uposhya pratipat Shukle mukhyaasyaadaa paraahnakui, Tadabhavetu saayaahyaavyaapini parigruhyaataam/ (If darsha viddha extends from Amavasya during the Krishna Paksha upto Dviteeya, then ‘Upavasa’ or fasting becomes fruitful; incidentally fasting on Prathama Tithi of Shukla Paksha is required to be observed up to noon on the following day; in case dvteeya occurs beyond the next noon then the fast should continue till the evening) Praatassangava madhyaahnaa paraahnasaayamityyasau, Atraahnah pancadhaa bhago mukhyodvitryaadi bhaagataah/ (It is necessary to divide the day time of a day in to five parts viz. Praatahkaala or early morning, sangava or prenoon, Madhyaahna or noon, Aparaahna or post noon and Sayamkaala ie up to Sun set period; in any case it is required to divide the day time on two three parts) Purvaahno chatu paraahnah itidvedhaa vibhaagah, Purvaahno madhyaahnoparaahnah itidvedhaa vibhaagah/ Purvaahno madhyaahnoparaahnassayaahno iti charuvibhaahah, Praatassangava madhyaahnaa aparahaannasaayahna iti panchathaa vibhaagah/ (Purvaahno and Parahna are of two divisions; or there could be three units of Purvaahno-Madhyaahna-Aparahaah. Purvaahno, Madhyaahna, Aparahaah- and Saayaaahna could be four units; or as per the five divisions mentioned above). Devala
Rishi states: Yaam tithim samanupraapya tvastam yaati Divaakarah. Saathihik sakalaagneyaa daanaadhyayana karmasu/ (The specific tithi when Sunset takes place would be the one when Daana-Adhyayana- Karmas or charity, scripture reading and all other deeds of virtue- be performed) Sourepi states: Yaam praaapyastamah iti arkasyaavacchet saa trimuhurtagaah, Dharma krutyeshu sarveshu sampurnaantaam vidurbudhaah/ (Those with knowledge state that all acts of virtue be performed on that Tithi itself of Sun set with a possible extension of three ‘muhutras’) Sumantu Rishi is of the view: Tithi nakshatra niyame tithi bhantecha paaranam, Athonyadhaa paaranetu vrata bhangamavaapnuyaat/ (There might be risk of failure of the ‘Vrata’or the act of virtue performed with Shuchi-Uposha- Naivedya-Paaranas in the Dharma Karyas without reference to the prescribed Tithi- Nakshatra Regulations) Tithyante cha bhante cha paaranam yatrabhodyate, yaama trayordhva vartinaampraatarevahi paaranam/ (If three ‘yaamas’ exceed the limits of Tithi-Nakshatras, then paarana or breaking ‘upavaasa’ should be done only next morning) Mukhya Tithyantarayaesthu tithisheshopi grihyataam, Yo yasya vihitah kaalah tatkaala vyapitaan tithih/ (In case there is a problem of specified Tithi, then the extension of Tithi be also considered for the fasting limit; in any case, it would be advisable to decide on the preferred tithi for performing the Vrata keeping various such consideratons.) Now, about ‘Eka Bhukta Nirmaya’ or Eating once a day only, Skaanda Purana defined as follows: Durnardha samayaateetee bhujyate niyamena yat ekabhuksamiti prakram atastsyaa siddhivaiyah/ or eating limited meals in a formal way as per prescribed procedure that too once a full day/night after half day is known as ‘Eka Bhukta’. Bodhayana Maharshi qualified further: Madhyaana vyaapini graahyaa ekabhuksa vrate tithih, Pujaa vrateshu sarvatra madhyaahna vyaapini tithih/ (Eka Bhukta vrata should be definitely extended to post noon, that too after the prescribed duties from morning thereafter). In this connection there are six interpretations: Purvedyureeva madhyaana vyaapitam, Paredyureva madhyaahna vyaapitam, Ubhayatra tadyaapitvam, Ubhayatra tadyaapitvam, Ubhayatrena saamyena tadekadesha vyaapitvam, Vaishamyena tadeka desha vyaapitvam/ (Deciding on the applications of timings in the context of ‘Eka Bhukta’ or one meal a day, there are six variations: the fasting on the basis of one meal a day be effective from the previous day’s noon meal, noon day meal extended till next noon, both kinds of meals covering noon meals of the previous day and the current noon, both kinds of afore said noon meals of yester and current days excluded, avoiding one of the previous or following day noon meals, or avoiding both these previous two alternatives.’Nakta Vrata Nirmaya’: Varaaha Purana prescribes Margasheershe site pakshe Pratipadyaa tithirbhavet, tasyaam nakta prakurveeta raatrou Vishnum pujayet/ (This nakta vrata is prescribed to be observed on Margaseersh Shukla Prathama and worship Vishnu on that night by fasting through out the day and breaking it by the night with prescribed food like ‘kheer’ and gram flour with classified butter; through out the day Agni Karyas be performed with appropriate mantras in praise of Agni, the representative of Vishnu followed by Vishnu Puja; normally Satya narayana Vrata is stated to be performed. Varaha Purana also describes a series of Vratas like Kanti Vrata, Siubhagya Vrata, Shanti Vrata and so on. Reverting back to Nakta Vrata ‘Kaala Darsha’ mentions: Trimuhurtaa -astamanaat prakaaraccha tathaaviddhaa, tasyaam nakta vratam kuryaad harinakta vrataadyayathah/ (The Ratri Nakta named Hari Nakta is to commence three muhurtas before and anotherthree muhurtas later) Vyasa Maharshi states: Tri muhurtah pradoshayaat bhaanaavastangate sati , naktam tatra tu kartavyam iti Shastra vinischayah/ (As three muhurtas after Sunset is ‘pradosha’ time, and nakta by performed at that time as prescribed by Shastras) Skaanda qualifies: Pradosha vyapini nassaadduivaah naktam vidheeyate, Atmanodvignacchaayaam ati kraamaati Bhaskare, tannaktannakta mityaahah na naktam nishi bhojanam/ (Day time nakta is necessarily extended upto Pradosha while over double the
length of the shadow of Surya would be the nakta time, but food in the night is not considered as nakta. More over:

Arka dviparya raatrou cha chaturdashyashti divaa/ (When Nakta is observed the nights of Sundays, Amavasyas, and Pournamis are not appropriate for taking food and the respective previous days too food is to be unconsumed too.) Vriddha Yaginvyalkya assures: Purvaahnikaastu tithayah Daiva kaare phala pradaah/ (When Naktā is observed the nights of Sundays, Amavasyas, and Pournamis are not appropriate for taking food and the respective previous days too food is to be un consumed too.) Vriddha Yaginvyalkya assures:

Arka dviparya raatrou cha chaturdashyashti divaa/

(Dviteeya Tithi nirmaya: Ekadasyashtamishasthi dviteeyaa cha chaturdasi, Trayodshetvamaavaasyo uposhyasseyu praanavita/ (Bhrigu Maharshi suggested that the day after Ekadashi, Ashtami, Shashthi, Dviteeya, Chaturdashi, Trayodashi and Amavasya are worthy of Upoṣhya or fasting) Triiteeya Tithi nirmaya: Rambhaakhyaam varjayitvaat triiteeyaaantu Dvijaa sattama, Anyeshu sava karyeshu ganayuktau prashastate/ (Brahama Vaivarta Purana states that excepting Ramha vrata all other acts of virtue are of ‘Para viddha’ and thus auspicious on Triiteeya)

Chaturthee Gananaadhasya Maatrau viddhaa prashasyate, Mandhyaana vyaapini chetsyaatparatraschetparehanti/ (Brihaspati states that Vinayaka Chaturthi being of Maatru viddha if extends upto Madhyaana or post noon is consider ed as auspicious, but there beyond then the Vrata be performed in the next day) Panchami nirmaya: Chaturthee samyutakaarayaa panchami parayaa natu, Daive karmani pitrecha Shukla pakshe tathaasite/ (Haritasa Maharshi states that Pitru karyas be performed on Chaturthi either in Shukla Paksha or Krishna Paksha on Panchami preceding Chaturthi but not in the subsequent tithi of Shashthi) Shashthi nirmaya: Krshnashtami Shanda Shashthi Shivaraatritchartrudashi, Yetaah puva yutaah kaaryaah tithyante paaranam bhavet/ (Vashishtha Maharshi opines that auspicious days of Krishnashtami, Skanda Shashthi, Shiva Ratri, Chaturdashi be observed only if they are preceded by the earlier tithi of ‘Paarana’ or naivedya be performed at the end of the Vrata)

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Saptami nirmaya: Saptami poorva viddhaiva vrateshu nikhilesh yapi, Alaabhe purva viddhaayaah paravidhhaapi grihyataam/ (Kaala Nirnaya states: In respect of all the vratas on the relevant Tithi, only Saptami Purva Viddha be considered, lest it be construed as Para viddha) Ashtami Tithi nirmaya: Shukla paksheshhtami chaiva Shukla pakshe Chaturdashi, Purva viddhahaana kartavyaa kartavyaa parasam yutaa/ (In the case of Purva Viddha occurring the Shukla Paksha Ashtami, or Shukla Paksha Chaturdashi, then para viddha or the subsequent be considered; for instance Kraishnaashtami, in Krishna Paksha Shravana month, Durga Puja on Ashvin Shukla Ashtami) Krishna Ashtami nirmaya: Shravane bahule pakshe krishnaashtami vrataanma na karoti narojantyu bhavati krura raakhasah/ Shraavanasya cha maasasya krishnaashtasamyam Bnaraadhipa, Rohini yadilabheta janyanti naamasaa tithi/ (He who does not observe KrishnaashtamiVrata on Shraavana Bahula ashtami is destined to be reborn as a cruel demon; if Rohini nakshatra also coincides on that day, performance of the Vrata is doubly effective and victorious!) Shraavanevaa nabhasyaaoh rohini sahitashtami, yadaa krishna narairlabdho saa jayanti keertitaa/ (Vashishya Samhita is quoted: Krishna paksha Ashtami in Shravana month or Bhadrapada coinciding with Rohini Star is renowned especially as highly significant) Shraavanyaaam proushapadyaa vaayadda simham gatoravii, Jayantyaaraadhanam kuryaannatu karkata kanyakayoriti/ Yasimvarshe Shraavane vaanabhasyaaoh jayantina sambhavati, Tasmin varshe Shraavane maasa yeva krishnaashtami vrataamunushtheyam/ (Yojitisaraṇava prescribes that in the event of Shravana or Bhadrapada, Surya enters Simha raashi the Krishna jayanti be observed then only; also in a year if there is no coincidence of Rohini and Ashtami, then Krishnashtami be necessarily observed in Shravana month only) Simharashe gate Surye gagone jalaadakule, Maasiprshoththi padoaashtamyaam artha raatree vidhudaye, Budha vaarr vrisha lagne rohinyaaascharamaamshake, Shubye harshana yoge cha kaulavena yute tathaa, Vasudevena devakyaaam ahah jaatosmi padmaja/(Varaha Purana states that Lord Krishna declared that he would be
born to Vasudeva and Devaki when Surya was in Simha Rashi, as the Sky looked thickly clouded, at the mid night of Bhadrapada month’s Krishna Ashtami as Chandra appeared, on a Wednesday in Vrishabha lagna, Rohini’s last phase in Harshanamanugraha yoga with koulamvamanukarana!) Yathriktaa

Shraavane maasi Ashtami Rohiniyutaa kimpunarudbudha vaarena somenaapi visheshataah// Ashtami Rohiniyutaa nishyardhe yadi drishyate, Purvedyurnisheedhadhuur- dhvam aarabhyaparedyuh/

Nisheedhadarvaak yaa samaaptye Ashtami, Tatra ubhaytra raatri samban -dhaat kutra upavasaas iti chet, Paredyureva upavaasah praatah sankaapla kaalamaarabhyah pravatta -maanatvaat/ (Padma Purana explains about the great distinction of performing Krishnaashtami in Shravana month coinciding with Rohini and Monday or Wednesdays, especially if Moon is cited on Ashtami Rohini when the Vrata would yield outstanding results. Upavasa is best performed commencing from the previous night of Ashtami till the present night of Ashtami; in case Ashtami starts from the previous morning itself then the Upavas be observed on the next day. Navami Tithi nirnaya: Chaitra shuddhaatu Navami punarvasu yutaa yadi, Sairaa madhyaaahna yogena maha punyatamaabhabhavet/Shri Rama navamee proktaa koti Surya graahaadhihkaa, tasmindine mahaa punye Rama muddhishya bhaktitah/ Yatinchit kriyate Karma tadbhavayakshaya kaaranam, Uposhanam jaagarananam pitru niridisya tarpanam, Tasmin dinetu kartavyayam Brahmavaaptimheebhupubhih/ (Agastya Maharshi confirms that Chaitra Shuddha Navami if coinciding with Punarvasu nakshatra till the noon is ideal for observing Shri Rama Navami.Sham Rama Navami Vrata is far superior by a crore of observing a crore of Surya grahanas. On that day,even ‘Rama maatra smarana’ or memory of Shri Rama’s sacred name would yield lasting significance; if Uposhana, Jaagarana and Pitr Tarpana are performed, these would result in never ending fruits!!) Referring to the worship of Dashavataraas, each of these ‘Avatara dinas’ bestow enormous results viz. Matsya on Chaitra Krishna Trayodashi; Kurma on Jyeshtha Krishna Dvaadashi; Varaha on Chaitra krishna Panchami; Narasimha on Vaishakha Shukla Charurashi-Swaati nakshatra evening; Vaamana on Bhadrapada Shukla dvaadashi Shravana nakshatra; Parashu Rama on Margashira krishna dviteeya; Shri Rama on Chaitra shukla navami punarvasu nakshatra; Bala Rama;Vaishakha Shukla triteeya; Krishna on Shravana Krishnaashthami Rohini Nakshatra ans finally Kalki on Bhadrapada Shukla Dviteeya. Avatara dine punye Harimuddhisya bhaktitak. Upavasaasadi yatkinchit tadaanantyaya kalpate/ (Worshipping Maha Vishnu by observing Vratas and Upavasas in respect of any or all Incarnations of Him would indeed bestow Anatta Phala or Lasting Benefits! Dashami Nirnaya: Shukla pakshetithirgraahyaas yasaamabhuydite Ravih, Krishna pakshe tithirgraahyaas yasaamastamito Ravih/ (Shankha Nirnaya states:To decide on Dashami Tithi in Shukla Paksha, Sun rise be considered and in Krishna Paksha Sun set be taken into account. Vijaya Dashami in Ashviyuja Shukla paksha as also Gangavataraana snaanas be observed accordingly. Ekaa dashyaam upavasevnam kadaa chidati kramet, Nishkrutirnadyapa- syoktaa Dharma Shastre maneeshibhiih, Ekaadasyaannakaasayay nishkrutihkaapiinditaah// Ati vedhaa Maha vedha vedhaastii dhisha smritaah, Savyeepya vedhaa vigneyaa vedhassuryodaye matala/ (Sanatkumara Samhita states: Ekadashi fasting is a must both in Shukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha; this regulation ought to be observed; those who resort to Madya paana or bhojana have no excuse of pardon at all! There is no need to consider Ati Vedhaa or Maha Vedhaa while determining Ekadasha Tithi but is adequatet to ensure vedha if any at the time of Sun Rise!) Yadeecchedvishnuu saayujam sukham sampadamaatmanah, Ekaadashyaaam na bhunjeeta pakshayo rubhayorapi// Dvaadashitithiralpaayadi nasyaaparehah, Dashami mishtritaakaaryadoshostesteet vedhanah// Ekaadasheetu sampurnaa dvaadasheetu sampurnaaa dvaadashi vriddi gaamininanjali naama saa proktaa koto yagina phalapradaa// Adityeheh samkra -
On the subject of Ekadashi, Vishnu Rahasya Grandha narrates the relevant stanzas: Those who aim at happiness, prosperity and ‘Vishnu Saayujya’ must necessarily abstain from food on both the Ekadashis. In case the following day is extended to Dvadashi or preceded by Dashami, Ekadashi fasting would be in order. If the whole day is of Ekadashi only plus some Dvadashi then the fasting is named ‘najanjuli’ and yields ‘koti yagjnaphala. But ‘ghrasththi’ or house holders are refrained from observing Ekadashi fasting on the days of Solar Eclipse, on shraddha days or on those who beget children on Shraddha days, on Ekadhis falling in Krishna paksha and on days of ‘Vyatiipaata’. Further house holders are definitely required to observe fasting on Shayni Ekadashi, Uttahaana or Bodhana Ekadashi.

Brahma Vaivarta Purana states that in the context of early mornings, four ‘ghadiyas’ are stated to be relevant as called Vedhaa chatusraya: three and half ghadiyas are known as Arunodaya Vedha and the rest as Surya darshana; if Surya is not seen then also Mahavedha is stated to prevail as Tureeya Yoga. Now, in case there is dashami Sesha at the Sun Rise, Vaishnavaites normally perform Vrata without fasting) In this connection Narada states: No poshyaa Dashami viddhaa sadaiva Ekadashi tithih, Taamupohya narojuhnaat punyam varsha shato bhavam/(Fasting on Ekadashi with Dashami Viddha annuls the fruits of hundred years!) Be that as it may the Ekadasha Vrata is outlined as follows: The Invocation states: Dashami dinaarambha kaarsheham vratam tavaa, Tridinam Deva devesha nirvighnam kuru Keshava! Or ‘Keshava! I resolve to observe the Ekadasha Vrata for three days of Dashami-Ekadashi-Dvadashi; do kindly bless me to perform without any hindrance!’ Then the karta should observe Eha Bhukta or one simple meal a day with no fries and grams, keep restraint on excessive quantity of eating and drinking juices, observe celibacy and abstention, observe silence, and declare: Ekaadshyaam niraahaarobhutvaaha mapare hani,Bhakshyaami Punareekahsha sharanamme bhavaacchhyuta/ or Pundarikaaksha! I will fast on Ekadashi and break the fast on the following day; kindly ensure my health. With namo Narayana Mantra ringing in the ears form, the puja be performed with Deepa-Dhupa-Pushpa-Phala-Śnaana of the Murti- yagnopaveeta-vastra-naivedya-arathi- mangala vaadya-geeta- nityaadi upacharas and Ratri jagarana with japa-dhyana-patana- gaana-nityaadi krama till next day with patience, calmness and truthfulness followed by Punah Puja the next morning and Brahmaṇa-viyārtha bhojana the next noon! Dwaadashi nirnaya: Shuklaaya - ayadiivaa Krishnaa dvadashi shravanaanvitaa, Tayorevopavasasch a trayo dashyaantu paaranam/ Chaturmuhurtam dwaadashyaam aadyamekaadashi tuthou, Ante chatur muhur - tam yattakaalam Harivaasaram, Nakaaryam paaranam tatra Vishnuprenaata taparaath// (Brahmarshi Narada affirms that Dwaadashi Tithi either in Shukla Paksha or Krishna Paksha needs to be united with Shravana nakshatra worthy of observing ‘upavasa’ and also ‘Paarana’ is required to be observed only on the following Trayodashi. More over, those who are genuine devotees of Vishnu should not perform paarana during ‘Hari vaasara’ time ie. During the last four muhurthas of Ekadashi and the first four muhurtas of Dwaadashi ) Yadaatvalpaadvaadashi syaadapan -karsho bhujor bhavet, Praatarmaadhyaaanikasyaapi tatrasyaadapakarshanam/ (Garuda Purana states that if Dwaadashi prevails a bit in the early morning hours, then one could quickly execute morning and noon rituals and give up dvadashi upavasa thereafter and this kind of alternative is called ‘apkarshana’) Devala Maharshi states: ‘ Sanghate
vishame prapte dwaadashyaam paaranam kathaim, Adbhustu paaranam kuryaat punar bhuktam na dishakrit/ (Devala Maharshi provides a convenient alternative that in extreme situations, ‘paarana’ before Dwadashi ghadiyas be executed and ‘uopashya’be called off too. Incidentally, there are eight kinds of Maha dwadashis: that tithi which is predominantly Ekadashsi but extends into Dwadashi is called Unmeelani dwadashi; that which is Shuddha or of Shukla paksha extending to the next phase of krishna paksha is called ‘Vaangjuli; if Ekadashi occurs at Suryodaya and extends upto the next morning’s Trayodashi then the Maha Dwadashi is called Tridarshi Dwadashi; if Dwadashi extends towards Darshani/Amavasya or Pournamithen that is named Paksha vardhini; if it is with Pushyami then it is called Jaya dwadashi; with Shrvana then Vijaya, with Punarvasu then Jayanti and with Rohini then paapanaashani! Upavasaas on these Dwadashis are stated to be extremely fruitful! Trayodashi nirnaya: Trayodashi prakartavyaa dwaadashi sahitaa Munaih/ Dwadashi extending to Trayodashi is of significance to Sages. Not only that: Trayodashi falling before Shukla Paksha and after Krishna Paksha are of significance. Beginning from a Shukla Paksha Trayodashi falling on a Saturday, pradosha kaala pujas to Bhagavan Shiva as also nakta bhojana executed on twenty four Shukla Tradodashis would lead to Shiva Prapti! Chaturdashi nirnaya: Madhu Shravana maasasya Shuklaayaa cha Chaturdashi, Saa raatri vyapini graahyaa paraapurvaahna gaamini/ Extending from the night of Shravana Shukla Chaturdashi upto the following day’s pre noon, performance of AnantaVrata is fruitful. Chaturdashi is counted as occurs before Purnima in Shukla Paksha, or alternatively on a day before Amavasya in Krishna Paksha. Pournami-Amavasya nirnaya: Except Savitri Vrata which can be observed on both Pournami or Amavasya, all other vratas are scheduled on both the days; the principle is that even there is a vedha from chaturdasi to the next tithi by eight ghadi: Bhuta viddhaa na kartavyaa Amavasyaa cha Purnima,
Varjayatwaa Munishreshtha Savitri vratamuttamam/ (Purva viddhas are not to be considered as a hindrance to perform any Vrata excepting that of Savitri Vrata as a single exception). In fact, Amavasyas coinciding with Mondays and Tuesdays are considered as very auspicious for snaana-daanas!

Tarpanas on Amavasyas: Deva tarpana of Vasu-Rudra-Adityas; Rishi tarpana to Kashyapa- Atri-Vasishtha- Vishwamitraadis; Divya Manushya Tarpana of Sanaka Sanandanaadi- Kapilaadis; Divya Pitru Tarpana, and the third generation of Pitru devatas is stated to be a grihasthi dharma. Maha Bharata Anushasanika Parva-125 Adhyaya states that Amavasya Phala Shruti is as follows: Amaavaasyayatu ye martyaaah prayacchanti tilodakaam, paatramoudumbaram graahyam madhu mishram tapodhanam/ Kritam bhagavati taah shraadham sahasram yathaa vidhi, hrishta pushtamaanastham prayayante prajaa dhruvam/ Kula vamshasa vridhhistu pindadasya phalam bhavet, shraddhaayustah yah kuryaatritrinaa manrunnaa manruno bhavet/ (Pitru devas assert: Amavasya tila tarpana from a honey mixed aoudumbara patra is as fruitful as a formal Shraaddha Kriya; this would bestow the fruits of excellent progeny and vamsha vridhdi besides fullfillment and happy life ahead) Yama tarpana is to be performed on Ashvijaya Krishna Chaturdashi on or Krishna Paksha Chaturdashi coinciding with Tuesdays: the relevant Mantra is as follows: Pretotsava chaturdasyaam kaaryantu Yama tarpanam, Krishnaagaara chaturdasyaapi kaaryam sadaiva vaa/Yamaaya Dharmaa Raajaaya Mruteve chaantaakaayacha, Vaivasyataaya Kaalaaya Sarva bhuta kshayaayacha/ Ouodumbaraaya Dhadhnaaya Neelaaya Parameshtine, Vrikodaraaya Chitraaya Chitraquptitaya te namah/ Such is the significance of Tarpanas! Shiva Ratri nirnaya: Maghaya klrishna pakshe vaa tithischet chaturdashi, raatri tasyaamaakhyaataa Shiva raatrissivapiya/ Tasyaam sarveshu Lingeshu tadaa samkramate Harah, Yuani kaanyatra lingaani charaaani sthaavaraamicha/ Teshu samkramate Devi tasyaam raatruv yatoharah Shivaraatristitakah proktaa tenasad Haravallabha! Aditya - astamaye kaale tvastichedvaa Chaturdashi tadaatraityaat saa bhaveduttamottaaam/ (Skanda Purana states that the night of Maagha Krishna Chaturdashi be noted as the auspicious austerities as being very dear to Bhagavan Shiva. It is believed that Shiva would enter into all the Shiva lingas, be they stable or
mobile; since on that night of Maagha Krishna Chaturdashi, it is popular as Shiva Raatri. In the event of Sunset when Chaturdashi is extended, then that most auspicious night is worthy of high veneration) Pursvedyura paredyurva Maha nishi Chaturdashi vyaptaa saa drushyate yasyaam tasyaam kuryaat vratannarah, Mama priyakarihyeshaa Maagha Krishna Chaturdashi Mahaanishyanvitaat yatra tatra kuryaddidam Vratam/(Ishaana Samhitastates: Maha Shiva Ratri Vrata be observed if the midnight of that ChaturthiTithi occurs either before of later. Lord Shiva is stated to have stressed that the Outstanding Night of Maagha Krishna Chaturdashi is indeed very dear to him.) Upavasa prabhavaena balaadapi cha jaagaranam, Shiva raatrastraahaa tatra Lingasaapi prapujaanam, Akshayaan labhate bhogaan Shiva saayujyamaapnuyaat/ (In Naagara Khanda of Skanda Purana, it is declared that along with Shiva raatri Upavasa, if ‘Jaagaran’ or engaging oneself the whole night with the prayers and worship of Bhagavan Shiva is executed then one would be eligible for endless fortunes and Shiva saayujya thereafter!)

Rudiments of Dharma

Dharmo Vishvasya jagatha pratishthaa/ Vidadvibhinsevitassadbhih nityamadvesharaagibhih, Hridayenaabhyanu jnaatoyastam Dharmam vyavasyata/ (As Veda and Manu Shastra define, Dharma or allround Virtue and Justice is such as earnestly and heartily practised by persons of erudition and balance) Nadharmadadhandharmou charatah aavasyah iti na devaah, na gandharvaah, sa pitar ah ityachakshate ayam dharmo anayadharmaa iti, Yastvaaryah kriyamaanam prashamsantisa dharmah, yadagarhane so adharma iti/ (As Vastamba states that those high practitioners of Dharma have no special considerations as being ‘mine’ or ‘thine’, be they Devas, Gandharvas, PitruDevas and so on. Those who have been practised from the days of yore through generations is named Dharma and that which has not been so is defined as Adharma) Vedokhilo dharmo mulam smritisheelec ha tadvidaam, Aachaaraachaiva saadhunaam Atmanashtushtirevacha/ (Manu also states that the Principles of Dharma are such as those as practised by ‘Sadhus’ or who were replete with it as its traditional followers and attained proven fulfillment) Sarvavarnaamaam swadharmaanushthaane parama parimitam sukham, tatah parivrittau karma phala shshenaa jaatim rupam varnam balam, medhaam praginaam dravyaani Dharmaanu – sthaanamiti pratipadyante tacchakravadubhayorlokayoh sukha eva vartate/Aapatambahha adds further that irrespective of ‘Varnas’ or classes of the Hindu Society of Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaisnhys etc. all should pursue ‘Svadharma’ or their own established principles of the concerned class and as such secure the respective kinds of form, colour, strength, intellect, wisdom, wealth, and so on and enjoy aspirations of their respective lives) Chatunaampaapi varnanaamaam Aacharo Dharmapaalakah, Aacharabhrashta dehaaam bhaveddhatma paraanmakhhah/ (Paraashara Maharshi stressed that ‘Dharma Palana’ or Observance of the Principles of Dharma would just be to follow the defined principles of each class of Society and devotions as marked as Adharma or the negation of Virtue) Vedovaa Hari bhaktirvaa bhaktirvaapi Maheshware, Svaachaaraatpadititaam mudham na punaati dvijottamam/ Punya khetraabhiyamanam punya tirthha nishvanam, Yajnovaa vividho Brahman tyaktaachaaram ra rakshat/Aacharaaat praapyyate swargah aacharaaat praapyyate sukaam, Aacharaaat praapyyate mokshah, Aacharaat kim na siddhati/ (Maharshi Narada emphasises that those ‘dvijas’- or twice born are who undergo the Sacred Thread Ceremony and observe the concomitant principles thereof and those who are devoid of Vedadhhyana or recitation of Vedas, devotion to Hari, devotion of Shiva, visits of ‘Punya Kshetras’ and ‘Tirthas’and execution of sacrifices like yajnas are disqualified to be dvijas and as such deserve to be declared against! Indeed it is the ‘aachara’ or the tradition which gains heavens, happiness and Salvation finally; would be there anything that is unattainable from ‘Aachara’!) Now, Dharma Shastra Kartas are detailed as follows: Manurtrihaspatirdaksho Gautamoyamongeeraah, Yageswarah Prachetaa
-scha Shaataatapa Pasaasharou, Samvartoshanasau Shankha Likhitavattrirevacha, Vishnava -astamba, Haareetaa Dharma shastra pravartika/(Manu, Brihaspati, Daksha, Gautama, Yama, Angirasa, Yogeshwara, Prachetasa, Shaataatapa, Parashara, Samvarta, Ushanasa, Shankha, Likhita, Atri, Vishnu, Apatamba and Haaritas are the eighteen Dharma Shastra Pravartakas or the eighteen Interpreters of repute). Further the Apara Sutras or Outstanding Principles of Dharma are as follows viz. Bodhayananam Apastambam Satyashadhadam Drakshayaanam Aagastyam Shakalyam Ashvalaayanam Shambaleeyam Katyaayanam iti navaani purva sutrani/ Vaishnasanm Shou Ancheym Shrabhavaajam Agni Veshyam, Jaimineeyam, Maadhunyam, Maadhyandinam, Koundinyam, Kaushetikam navani aparaputra sutrani/The purva and apara sutras were scripted by the respective Maharshis! The Places worthy of Dharmaacharana are stated as follows: Krishna saarairyavairdabhescha aturvarna ashramai stathaa, Samruddho Dharmadeshasuyaadaashashrayeranvipeschitah/ (Smriti Chandrika states: Those places where there is ample availability of Krishnasaa, Yava, Darbha and all the four Varna persons as also well read and knowledgeable Vidvans are indeed worthy of residence!) Na mleccha vishya shraaddham kuryaat nagacchet mleccha vishayam/ Kaaveri Tungabhadraa cha Krishna venicha Gautami, Bhaageerathi vikhyaatataah Pancha Gangaah prakeertitaah / (Vishnu Purana suggested that Shraddha Karmas be avoided in Mleccha Deshas nor even visit those places. The Sacred Rivers of Kaveri, Tungabhadra, Krishna Veni, Gautami, Bhagirathi are however deemed as Pancha Gangas) Referring to Yuga Dharmas, Parashara Maharshi narrated that Krita-Treta-Dvapara-Kali Yugas each of twelve thousand divya years each yuga and Tapas or High Meditation was of significance in Krita yuga, Jnaana in Treta Yuga, Yajna Karyas in Dvapara yuga while ‘Daanameva Kaliyugau’ daana alone is of high priority in Kali Yuga. The Maanava Praanas or Vital Forces of Human beings are essentially ‘Asthigatas’ are oriented to the essentiality of bones during Krita Yuga, Maamsa gata or dominated by flesh in Treta yuga, Rudhira gata or dependent on blood while in Kali Yuga the praanas are based on the food intake in Kali Yuga. Krite sambhashanaadeva Tretaayaam sparshavairdabhescha dvaaparetvam annama -adaaya Kalou patati karmanah/ A human being is subject to down fall due to conversation during Krita Yuga, due to sparsha or mutual touch in Treta Yuga, due to food in Dvapara Yuga and due to ‘Dushkarma’ or evil acts in the Kali yuga) Vishnu Purana: Sarve Brahma vadavyanti sampraptetun Kaloau yuge, Naanu tishthanti Maitreya shishnodara parayanaah/ Yada yadaasataam haanih Vedamargaanu saarinaam, Tadaa tadaa Kaler -vritthih anumeyaa vichakhshanaah/ Veda Vyaasawaavacha: Yatkrute dashabhirvarshaah tretaayaam vaayanenatu Dwaapare tucchamaasena hyahoraatraena tatatalou/ Dhyaayan Krite yajan yagjaih Tretaayaam Dwaapare archayan, Yadaapnoiti tadaapnoiti Kalou samkeerta Keshavam/ Naaradiye/ Hare Keshava Govinda Vaasudeva Janaarddana, Itteayanti nityam sahitaan badhate Kalih/ Shiva Shankara Rudreti Nilakantha Trilochana, Itteayanti ye nityam sahitaan baadhate Kalih/ Shiva Shankara Rudreti Neelakantha Trilochana, Itteayanti ye nityam sahitaan baadhate Kalih/ (Vishnu Purana details Yuga dharmas as follows: In Kali Yuga, every one discusses about Brahma Jnaana but none is really interested in it since they are overwhelmed of selfishness, centric psyche and sex but none really is serious in favour of Brahma Jnaana; and when there occurs a danger to the Virtuous, there is the upgradation of evil forces and infringement of virtue, and the signs of Kali Yuga become prominent and clear. Vyasa states: What ever deeds of virtue are performed in ten years in Krita yuga are as dispensed with or equal to those performed in one Ayana on Treta Yuga, one month in one Dvapara yuga and even in single day-night on Kali Yuga. Thr rewards of virtue by of Tapas during KritaYuga are as good as Yagjnas in Treta yuga, worship in DvaparaYuga and even ‘Samkeertanas’ rendering Sacred Songs in Kali yuga) Narada Brahmarshi that states the soulful singing of Narayana as: Here Keshava Govinda Vaasudeva Janardana
Iteerayanti nityam sahitaan baadhate Kalih/ Or alternatively as Shiva Shankara Rudreti Neelakantha Tricchana, Itirtayanti ye nityam sahitaan baadhate Kalih/ That is either render Hari Smarana or Hara smarana as above! Kali Yuga would never ever torment sincere prayers with the naamas as mentioned above. Such indeed are the Yuga Dharmas! Mentioning briefly about the process of Creation Manu described as follows: Yosavateendriyah agraahyah shukshmah avyaktaan sanatanah, Sarva bhutamayah achintyayaya savayumudhayouh/ Sobhiyaaya shariraraastraatvaat sirsukshuh vividhaapraajnaah, Apa yeva sasarjaadau taanaa beejamavaasruit/ Aaponaaraa iti proktaa aapovai narasunavah, taayadasya ayanam purvam tena Naraayana smritah/ Udbabarhaa taankaashaiva manah saddasadaatmakam, Manasa-chaapya hamkaara mabhimantaaraa meeshwaram/Mahantameva chaatmaanam sarvaani trigunaanicha, Vishayaanaam graheetruti shanaaip pancendriyaanicha/ Sarveshaa antu sanamaani karmoanicha prithakprithah, Veda shabdebyya yeavaa daa prithah samsthaash -cha nirmame/ (He who is unseen, unvisionable, unimaginable, ancient yet in-resider among each and every being was Self-Manifested! He desired to create several impulses and at the outset creared water and planted seeds therein. He named ‘Aaapa’ or ‘ Naara’ and named the resultant Beings as ‘Nara’ and as such the Supreme Creator of the Naara and Nara became to be the cause of the Creation as Narayana. Then from the Supreme Soul the impulse called Pure Conciousness which led to the creation of ‘Ahamkara’ or Self Consciousness and that led to ‘Manas’ or Thinking Phenomenon. Now from this emerged three types of ‘Gunas’ or Characteristics named Satvika-Rajasika-Tamasika and Panchendriyas or Five Limbs which readily absorb the Gunas as also the corresponding physical responses thus together called as Pancha Jnanendriyas and Pancha Karmendriyas. The names, functions and the mix of the Gunas have thus come to varied acts of positive and negative actions and reactions as directed under the command of Manas or the Mind! )

Varna Dharmas : Brahmana Dharma: Brahmanyaaam Brahmanaaajnataah samskruto Brahmano bhavet, Evam Kshatriya vitshudraajneyaasveebhyah svayoniya/ (Devala Maharshi defines a Brahmana born of the same parentage just as of Kshatriya, Vaishya and others) Adhyapanam cha adhyayanam yajanam yaajanam tathaa, Daaam prati grihaschaiva shat karmaayagnaah/ (Manu Smriti prescribes Vedaadhyayana and Adyaayana or learning and teaching of Scriptures, performing and letting to perform yajnas, and giving and accepting Charities are the six duties of Brahmanas.) Parashara Smriti details another set of Shatkarmas by Brahmanas: Shatkarmaabhirao nityam Devaathithi pujakah, huta sheshaantu bhungnaano brahmano naavaseedati/ Sandhyaa snaanam japo homo Devcharanam pujanam, Vishva Devaathithi yaamcha shatkarmanaa dina dine/ (Parashara Smriti emphasises observing Six Duties every day besides Deva Puja, Atithi seva, eating Yagjna sesh or the left over of Yagjnas; the six daily duties are Sadyhaa vandana thrice a day, Snaana, Japa, homa, Devcharana, and Atithi Puja) Naasikyaadathavaalasya agneenaah dhaatumicchati, Yajeta vaana yagjnena sayaati narakas bahun, Tasmaatsarva prayatena Brahmanohi visheshitah Aaadhayaagniinvishuddhaatamaa yajet paramesh varam/ (Maadhaveeya details that those Brahmanas either due to negative mentality of Nastikata or non significance of the Supreme, or due to sheer lethargy, if the prescribed Agni Karyas are not performed, then they are destined to suffer in narakas and hence the caution that Agni based Satkaryas be observed with clean consience and purity of thoughts!) Shroutam karmanachet cchaktah smaartam karma samacharet, Tatraapua shaktah karane kuryaadacharamantataah/(Gargya Muni exempts shrouta karma and if that is not possible, smarta karma be performed and even if that is not possible then ‘Sadaachara’ or Good Behaviour be observed definitely) Pratigrahaadhyayapano yaajanaanaam pratigraham shresh -thatamam vadam, Pratigrahashhudhyati Japya homau yajyastu paapaat punaanti vedaaah/ (Yama
Dharma Raja prescribes three major duties of Pratigraha, Adhyapana and Yaajana: Japa homa and Yajana are significant and Parigrafted or acceptance of alms purifies Tapastapsyandijottamah, Vedaabhaasoshi viprayatapath paramochyate/ (A dvija or twice born-and this is applicable to Brahmana-Kshatriya- Vaishyas- is required to learn such Tapo Vrata based ‘rahayas’ or hidden meanings of Vedas by the practice of meditations and vratas. Whosoever follows another Veda Shakta too becomes ineligible for dvija karmas. Every dvija is required to pursue one’s own heritage and pursuit that very Dharma of Adhyayana, Tapas and related virtues vigourously as the golden duty) Vedasveekaranam purvam vicharobhyasanam japah, Taddaanam chaiva shishyebhyaha Vedaabhyaaso panchadhaa/ (Daksha Prajapati defined the five duties of a Brahmana as Acceptance of a Veda, Veda Vicharanaya or Intras-perception of that specific Veda, Abhyasaya or repetitive memory, Japa or concentrated meditation and Veda Daana to one’s own followers are the Five Principles of Vedaabhyaasaa/) Satatam pratarutthaaya danta dhaavana purvakam, Snaatvaa hutvaacha shishyebhyah kuryaadhyaapanam narah/Yama details the Five Principles a Brahmana range from morning ablutions, snana, ‘homaadi pratahkala vidhis’ including homa vidhi and Vedabyasa to Disciples) Acharyaputrah Shushrushuh Jnaanadodharmikah Shuvih, Aaptah Shaktah Ardhadah Saadhuhsvodhyaapaadasha darmatah/ /Vridhadhou cha Maata Pitarao saadhvi bharyasutah shishuh, Apyakarya shatam kritwaa Bhartavyaa Maurabraveet/(Manu Smriti also states that one could assess the character and conduct, the physical and internal cleanliness and the depth of knowledge of companions like Acharya Putras, Sishyas, friends and such others. Another principle of Manu underlines the golden principle of up keeping and maintaining the elderly parents, devoted wife and young children.) Yet another principle of Brahmana Dharma as enunciated by Prajapati is: Yah svadharma parityagi paashandityuchyate budhaih, Tatsanga kritthat samasyaattaavu bhavapi paapinou, yetu saamaanya bhavena Manyante purushottamah, tevaai paashaan - dino jneyaah narakaarha naraadhamah/ (Those who desert their Svadharma or the Principles of one’s own family background are worthy of desertion of the Vamsha. Such persons who might be very knowledgeable still become irresponsible and are called sinners; further whosoever esteem Purushottama as normal and none too great are fit cases of abide in hell after their deaths!)

Kshatriya Dharma: Dushtaanaam shasanaadraajaa shishtaanaam paripalabnaat, Praapnotyabheepsitaan lokaan varna samsthaakaro nripah/ (Dushta shaasana and shishta paalana or punishing the evil and safeguarding the virtuous are the fundamental duties of a Ruler, says Vishnu Purana! ) Manu Smriti presents a good deal about the Kshatriya Dharma although considering the prevalent age of democracy when the Prajas are stated to be Raajas, these Kshatriya Dharmas suffer from current relevance and sound archaic. All the same, the Dharmas are being mentioned for the sake of the record: Kings should execute Vratas in favour of Indra, Surya, Vayu, Yama, Varuna, Chandra, Agni and Prithivi. Just as Indra enables good rains for four months a year, Kings by performing Indra vrata most sincerely must help his subjects keep happy with normal rains. Just as Sun God by the power of his rays collects taxes from his Subjects for eight months a year by the blessing of the Arka Vrata that a King performs. By bringing about happiness to his Subjects in his Kingdom, the King should perform Maruta Vrata and have the Subjects blessed with even temperature always! The King should execute YamaVrata to seek blessings to his Subjects so that those who are virtuous as also otherwise be treated at the time of their punishment or reward! The King also should
perform Vaaruna Vrata to bestow restraint to him to deal with his Subjects without favour or fear! The
King must also perform Chandra Vrata so that the King might be imbibed of natural equanimity and
fulfillment towards his Subjects! Also a King must perform Agneya Vrata to the Agni Deva deal with his
subordinates with appropriate harshness as and when required. Having detailed the concerned Vratas, a
Kshatriya for sure should be fully aware of the following instruction of Manu: Yathaa sarvaani bhutaani
dharaadhaarayate samam, Tathaa sarvaani bhutaani bibhratat Parthiva Vratam/ (A kshatriya by birth
should pay high consideration in favour of the son of one’s own teacher, servant, provider of knowledge,
Dharmatma, the one with high practice of Shuchi or Cleanliness of Body and Mind; a very near and dear
companion, a person of moral courage and physical support, provider of wealth, an extremely docile and
virtuous Sadhu and a Teacher- these are the ones a Kshatriya needs to always stand by and depend!)

Vaishya Dharma: Pashunaam rakshanam daanam ijyaadhyayanevamchaa, Vanik patham kusheedam cha
Vaishyasya krishti mevachaa/ (Manu Smriti is quoted again: Vaishya dharmas include pashu rakshana,
daana, puja, adhyayana, business, and trading)

In sum Parashara Maharshi aptly describes: Kshatriyopi krushim krutvaa dwijam devaampujayet, Vaihyah
anyastathaaakuryat krishii vaaniyaa shilipkaan/ Chaturnaapi varnaamsha dharma sanaatanah/
(Kshatriyas display their industriousness , valor and courage and serve Brahmanas for thier involvement
and dedication in Deva Pujas; Vaishyas earn out of theirtrading and business skills and so do the other
class of Society due to their ability in crafts. Thus the Four Varnas are engaged in their own respective
duties as their contributions to the society as per their own prescribed Dharmas!) Common Dharmas to
all Varnas: Kshamaa satyam damah shoucham daanam indriyamah, Ahimsaa Guru shushrushaa
tirthaanusaranam dayaa/ Aarjavam lobha shunyatvam Deva Brahmmana pujanam, Asabhyaasuyaacha
tatha Dharmah saamaany uchyate/ (Common Dharmas, irrespective of Varnas as prescribed by Vishnu
Maharshi include truthfulness, patience, control of emotions, cleanliness of body and mind, disposition of
charity, self control, non violence, service to teachers, visits to Tirtha Places, kindness and generosity,
straightforwardness, broad-mindedness and worship of Brahmanas and Devas)

Grihastha Dharmas: Grihastu dayaa yakto dharmameva anuchintayet, poshya vargaartha siddhyartham
nyayavartaa su buddhiman/ (Parashara states that Grihastis or house holders should be always engaged
in compassion, just conduct and observance of virtue as also the upkeep of the family members on the
path of worthy upbringing, training and justice) Nyaayopaarjita vittena kartavyam hyata rakshanam,
Anyaayena tu yo jeelvat sarva karma bahishkrutah/ (The Grihasthi is never ever to deviate from the
practice of living with well earned money within his means and maintan his family with uprightness being
aloof of undeserving temptations of life) Vivaahena pitrunarchan yajnardevaam stathaaitheen
annairmuneenscha svadhyayairapatyena praajapateem, Balinaahiva bhutaani vatsalyaakhilam jajat,
Prapnoti purusholokaan nijakarma samarjitaan/ Bhikshaa bhujantyekechiet parivraabhmachaarinaah,
Tepyaatraiva pratishthante gaarhasthyam tenavaparam, Yastu samyak karotyevam grihastah param
vidhim, Svadharma bandhamuktosao lokaanapatrayanuteyyan/ (Once wedded, a house holder should
take up the responsibility of satisfying Pitru devatas; Devatas by yagnas and sacrifices, bhojanaadi
facilities to Atithis, by svadhyaya make Munis happy, by progeny with Prajapati, Bhutas by Balis,and
the entire Society with rapport and good will. By observing these duies a householder would certainly
attain higher lokas. Grihasthazaruma is ideally blessed to help the beggging Parivrajakas to satisfy their
hunger as also help Brahmcharis, besides performing their own duties and finally reach high lokas)
Grihashramaat paro dharmo naasti naasti punah punah, Sarva tirtha phalamtasya yayoktam yatsu paalaye/ (Vyasa Smriti adds further dimensions to Grihastha Dharma: This truism needs to be stressed again and again that there could be no better dharma as evidenced in Grihastha Ashrama; those who observe Ashrama Dharmas with conscience are rewarded with the fruits of Sarva Tirtha Darshana)

Guru bhakto bhrutya poshi dayavaannasuyakah, nityajapi cha homi cha Satyavaadi jitendriyah/ Swaadaro yasya santosha para daaraa nivartanam/ Apavaadodip no yasya tasya tirthaphalam graham (Those Grihasthis who pay great attention to Gurus, followers, servants and dependents, are of kindly disposition, without being querrelsome and non complaining, observing nitya gayatri japa homaas, being satyavaadis or highly truthful, self restrained of his physical limbs, fully contented with his own wife and respectful to other females, and of impeccale character and reputation would reap the fruits of Sarava Tirtha darshana even being stable in one’s own residence)

Pratishrayam paada shoucham Brahmanaancha tarpanam, na paapam samprushyatasya balim bhikshaam padaati yah/ (Those grihastis who invite Brahmanas, wash their feet, offer ‘neerajaana’ while standing with esteem and serve bhojana and satisfy them along with other services would be completely unreachable for any kind of sins)

Paadodakam paada ghritam deepamannam pratishrayaam, yo padaati brahmanebhyo nopasarpattam Yamah/ (Those grihastis who wash the feet of Brahmanas with water and ghee, offer deepa, anna, and respectful hospitality shall be indeed be out of bounds even of Yama dharma Raja)

Yat phalakapilaa daane kartikyam jyeshtha pushkare, tatphalam Rishayah shreshthaa vipraanaam paadashouchane/ Svagatena agnyahpreetaa aasanena Shatakratuh, Pitarah paada shouchenaannaa- dyena Prajapathi/(The punya that would accrue from Pushkara Tirtha Snaana and Go daana on a Kartika Pourami day would approximate the ‘pada prakshaalana’ or cleaning the feet of an Atithi Brahmana Vidvan! The Grihastici welcoming a Brahmana Atithi would have pleased Agni deva, the guest beingseated comfortably would have made Indra happy too! Pitru devas would have been delighted and Prajapati himself would have been contented by Brahmana Bhojana!)

Maataa Pitrou poaram tirtham Ghangaa gaavo visheshitaah, Brahmanaat parama tirtham na bhutam na bhavishyati/ (Any house holder would normally consider his parents as Punya Tirthas and especially so in the case of cows; but Brahmana as the Atithi is the parama tirtha as never in the pastd nor in the future! Any person might as well stay in one’s own home if only his physical parts and mental faculties are controlled utmost; indeed his own house is as good as Kurukshetra, Naimisha and Pushkar Tirthas! Varnam ashramaanaan chatur varnasya bho Dvijaah, Daanadharmaan pravikshyaami yathaa vyasena bhaasitam/ The utmost moral that anyone of the Chatur Varnas should follow and observe that Vyasa Maharshi emphases is that one’s own home be considered as any Tirtha, provided he or she could control one’s own faculties! Vyasa Smriti also stresses: Nityam svadhyascheelaasyaat nityam yagnopaveetivaan, Satya vaadee jitakrodho Brahma bhuyaaya kalpate/ Sandhyaasnaanaa rato nityam Brahma yogna paraayanah, Anasuyah mridurdaantah grihastah prayyavardhate/ Veeta raaga bhaya krodhah lobhamohavivarjitah, Saavitri japya niratah shraaddhakrummucyate grihee/ Maataa Pitorhite yokto go brahmana hiteratah, Yajyaacha Deva Bhaktascha Brahma loke maheeyate/ (Nitya Svaadhyaaya, nitya yagnopaveeta, nitya sathya bhashana and nitya shanti vrata are the principal qualitas of a noble house holder. He should be devoid of ‘raaga bhaya krodhas’ or free from desires-fears-angers; he should be ever interested in performing Savitri Vrata, and be dutiful in Shraddha Karmas so as to qualify himself for attaining salvation. He must be dutiful to his parents, cows, guests; be in the regular habit of performing ‘Satkarmas’ or Acts of Virtue such as Shraddhas etc. to qualify for Brahma Loka )

Manu Smriti observes too similarly: Shuti smrityuditam dharmanamanisthan hi Maanavah, Iha keerti mavaap -noti pretyachaanutammaam gatim/ Those who dutifully observe the principles enunciated on
Veda Shastras do fulfill their aspirations and glory, besides accomplishing the Upper Worlds!

Sanyasa Dharmas: Yama Deva defines Sanyasa: *Yena sataanajaa doshah ye chasyuh karma sambavaah, Sanyaasastaan dahet sarvaan tushaadagniriva pratimaadikam/* (Either due to the problems created by progeny or due to the deeds done by the Self, the discontentment experienced by a person burns off like burnt rice husk to gold) Dakshan Prajapati affirms: *Trimshatparaamstrim shadaparaan trimshacchhapara–tah paraan, Sadyassannysasanaa deva narakaattrayaetye pitraan/* (On account of Sanyasa of a person in a vansha, Pitru Devatas of thirty generations before and another thirty generations ahead would be saved from narakas!)

Samvarta Grandha classifies four types of Sanyasa viz. Kuteecha, Bahudaka, Hamsa and Paramahamsa. Bodhayana explains that Kuteecha after taking to Sanyasa retains shikha-yagnopaveeta and tridanda while practising Sahasra Gayatri would take food from relatives and friends. He should be absorbed in Japa- Dhyana-Pathana and concentrate on Paramatma always. Bahudaka after assuming sanyasa should severe family connections, take to bhiksha from seven houses and abstain from evening meal. Hamsa might retain yagnopaveeta, danda for self defence, and minimum cloth and spend most of the time in loneliness and meditation as food is non-significant. Parama hamsa is described by Atri Muni as follows:*Koupeena yugalam kandha danta ekah parigrahah yateh, Parama hamsasya naadhidhastu vidheeyate, Parah Parama hamsastu turyakhyah Shriti shaasanaat/ Daantah Shaantah Satvasamah Pranavaabhyasa tatparah, Shravanaadiratassjhuddhah nidhi dhyaanatatparah/ Brahma bhavena sampurya brahmamadakshilam sthitihat/ Atma triptasamhitaṁ samallowedhayaṁ kanchanah tatvam padaika boddhaacch Vishnu rupam svayam sadaa nivaset paramahamsastu yatrrakvaapi kathanchana/ A Sanyasi named Parama hamsa has no possessions except a ‘koupeena’ or loin cloth piece, a sheet to cover in winter and a danda or stick. As per Shruti’s instruction he is named ‘parama hamsa turi’ and is of outstanding feaures as a Danta-Shanta-Satvaguna-Pranava japi- Shuddha, Satva guni, Pranava japi, Shuddha, Nilhi dhyana tapara, Atma Tripta, Atma ratha, and Tatvagaya!) Yagnyavalkya describes: *Dhyaanam shoucham tathaabhiksaa niytamekaanta sheelataa, Bhikshaschatvaari karmaani panhamam nopapadyate/* ( To a bhikshu, there are four objectives of existence viz. Dhyana, Shoucha, Bhikshatana and Loneliness; there is no other fifth feaure except meditation to Paramatma) Kanva Muni instructs: *Ekaraatrim vasetb graame nagare pancha raatrakam, Varshaabhyonyatra varshaasu maasaamcha chaturovaset/ ( A Sanyasi should be on contant move, spending one nigh in a village or five nights in a town, but during the rainy season, he should chaatur maasya) Vyasa Maharshi states: *Mokshaahramam yascharate yathoktam Shuchissusankalpit buddhyuktah anindhanam jyotiriva prashaantamsabrahma bhaavam vrajet dvijaaat/ ( Duly purified in body, mind and thought, a dvija having turned into a sanyasi should be like a burning wood covered with ash and finally absorb himself into Brahma Jyoti!)

Stree Dharmas: *Ashta varsha bhaved Gauri nava varshaa tu Rohini, Dashavarshaa bhavet Kanya atha urthvam Rajasvala*/ Samvarta Muni defines: an eight year old girl is called Gauri or the Fair one, a nintheyear old is known as Rohini or a Cherry, a ten year aged is a Kanya or a maiden and thereafter a Rajasvala) *Maata chaiva Pitaachaiva jyeshtho bhraataa tathaiva cha, trayaste narakam yaani druhtvaa kanyaa rajasvala/* ( In case, the mother, father and elder brother of the girl has come of age an still remains unmarried the three are desired to visit hell) Manu Smriti is quoted: *Pitaarakshati Kaumare Bhartaa rakshati youvane, Putrastu sthaavire bhaave na stree swaataantryamarhari/ Sookshmabhyopi prasarangebhiyah striyo rakshyaa visheshatah, Dvayorhikulayoh shokamaavahed arakshitaah/ Imam hi sarva varnaanaam pashyanto dharmamuttamam/ Paanam durjana samsargah patayacha virahotanam, Svapnonyageha vaasascha naaree sandushamaani shat/ (During the ‘Kaumara dasha’ before wedding, the
father takes the responsibility, whereafter the husband and in old age the sons, thus a female is always protected though not independent! Even minute expressions might not offend a female and be safeguarded lest there might be unhappiness in either of the families of father and husband, and indeed a female plays a significant yet sensitive role of both the families and hence the need for her balancing act! However, a female is normally repudiated for six shortcomings: viz. suspicion of weakness for alcohol, bad company, aloofness from a husband, wandering and touring, dreaming away from reality, and staying lonely and living independently in other’s houses.) Manu Smriti also explains: Naasti streenaam pridhagyana naapyuposhanam, Patim shushrushate yattutena svarge maheeyate/ Kamanvrittevaan gunairvaa parivarmitah, Nastriyah parivarjyasaat satataam daiva vatpathi/ Sadaa prahaashtayaan bhavyam grihakaaryech dakshayaa, Susamskrutopaskarayaa vyayechaamuktahastayaa/ (As women have no yagjnas, vratas and such other acts of virtue, they are happy to share such acts along with their husbands. Notwithstanding the shortcomings of their husbands the wives would do well to with faith to them and concentrate more on their domestic chores with expertise and run the family with wisdom and dedication and be the major force of maintaining peace and happiness home) Vyasa Maharshi gave the instructions as follows: Haridraamkumkumamchaiva sindhuram kajjalam tathaa, Kurpaanakam cha taambolam mangalaabharanam shubham/ Kesha samskaara kabari kara karnaad bhushanam, Bhartur aayushyami -chanti dooshayenna Pativrataa/ Praataah kaaleetu yaa naari dadyaadarghyham vivasvate, Sapta janmaani vaidhavyaam saa naari naiva pashyati/Those women who are interested in the longevity of their husbands should not to ignore the high significance of turmeric powder, kumkuma, eyetex, vastra, jewellery like ear studs, bangles, necklaces etc. As at the early mornings, women offering Arghya or water for worshipping Surya Deva would aviod widow hood for seven births ahead! Krutvaa mandalakam Braahme tooshneem evaakshhataabhih pujayet satatam yaa tu tasyaastupiyanti Devataah, Yadgriham raajate nityam mangalaairuulatepanaath, Tadgrihe vasate Lakshmeernityam purnakalaanvitaah/ Pativrataa tu yaa naari bhartru shushrushanotsukaa, Natasya vidyate paapam ihelope paratracha, Pativrataadharmanarataa Rudraanyeva na samshayah, Tasyaah paraabhvavam kartum shaknoti nahanah kashchiti/ Those women who are interested in the longevity of their husbands shall qualify with attainment of her current and ensuing lives and eventually attain the status of a Rudrani or Devi Parvati.) In defence of good wives at the hand of evil husbands, Daksha Prajapati states as follows: Adushtaam vinataam bharyaam youvane yah parityaje, Sapta janma bhavestreetvam vaidhavyaam cha punah punah/ (Husbands who discard wives of good character and discipline would be cursed with widowership and womanhood for the subsequemnt seven lives!) Na mangalyam vadedvaakyam na cha haasyadikim chana, kuryaachhhvashurayornityam pujaam mangala tatparaa tishthet prasanna vadanaa bhattru priya hite rataah! Smriti Ratna cautions Sandhayaayaam nava bhoktayam garbhinyaatu prayatnatah, nasnaatavyam na gantavym vriksha muleshu saevada/ (Gabhini Strees or women in confinement not to take food at Sandhya timings or the intervals of night-day nor day nights of any day, nor take bath or go near tree foundations) Naan maangalyam vadevaayyam na cha ghaasyaadikimchana, Kuryaat shvashurayornityam pujaam mangala tatparaa, tishthetprasanna vadanaa bhattru priyahite rataa/ (Strees should not utter inauspicious words even for fun; they must always worship father and mother in laws and be pleasant with husbands for ever!) Yagnayalkya stresses : Dao hridayasyaar pradaane nagarbe doshamavaapnyaat, Vairupyam
In the event of married women desirous of shortening their hair for reasons of religion and faith as example of ‘Veni Samhara’ at Sangama of Rivers, then the husband himself is required to perform the Vrata by scissoring the hair by two inches. Tirtha yatras, temple visits and religious places are congregations if unaccompanied by husbands are considered as a waste and fruitless. Similarly husbands performing any activity of religion without the presence of wives is considered purposeless. Vyasa Maharshi explains of some features of widows: Patyaomritepi yo yoshivaidhavam paalayet kvachit, Saapunah praapya bhartaaram swarga bhogaan sameeshnute/ Vishnostu pujanam kaaryam patibudhaana chaanyadhaa, Patimeva sadaa dhyayedvishnu rupa dharam param, Evam dharma paraanityam vidhavaap shubhaamataa/ As a husband passes away and the widow observes the regulations of widowhood, the woman concerned shall most certainly enjoys a high level of conjugal happiness in her ensuing life. Since a widow is distinguished as being one, it is preferred that her head hair is removed forever, takes a single meal a day and refrain from a second meal that day! She should not use fragrances and not utilise flowers; every day she should perform tarpana with ‘tilodakas’ or black Tilas with water using ‘darbhas’. Those women who are widowed should consider as the diseased husband as Vishnu himself and then her remaining life would be spent peacefully without problems and even though as of a woman of auspiciousness).

Daana Mahima: Daatavyam prayatvam paatre nimittetu visheshatah, Yaachitenaapi daatavyam shraddhau putam cha shaktitah/ (Maharshi Yagnavalkya described the feature of ‘Daana’ or Charity: every human being should resort to daana dharma on each and every day as per one’s own capacity, especially on the days of Solar and Lunar Eclipse days. Charity is indeed to be given to those asking for it as per one’s ability!) Vaaridah triptimaapnoti sukhamakshayyamannadah, Tilapradam prajaamishtaam deepadaschakshuruttamam/ Bhumido bhumi maapnoti deerghamaayurhiranyadah, Grihadograanivesh-maani rupyyado rupamuttamam/ Vaasodaschandra saalokym Ashviptaalokymashvadhah, Anaduddhaha shriyam pushtim odhodnwaschcha vishthapam/ Yaana shayaaprado bhaaryamaishvarya mabhayapradah, Dhaanyadah shasvatam soukhyam Brahmadro Brahmasaashittaam/ (Those who provide charity of water begets satisfaction, food yields Lasting happiness,tila daana bestows excellent progeny, charity of Light gets vision, Bhu dana begets lot more of Bhumi, Suvarna Daana provides longevity, Griha daana yields huge buildings, charity of cash bestows excellent beauty of physique, vastra daana provides Chandra loka, Ashva daana bestows Ashvini Deva Loka, charity of ox yields affluence, Go daana provides great health and body strength, he who gives away a comfortable bed is blessed with a wonderful wife, offering shield and protection begets opulence, dhanya daana bestows lasting happiness and traching Brahma Vidya bestows Brahma Saakashkaaraa! Sarveshaameva daanaanaam Brahmaa daaanaam visishyate/ (Indeed Brahma Vidyaa daana is the ultimate among all the types of Charities!) Ayaachtaani deyaani sarva daanaani yattatah, Annami Vidyaaha Kanyaachayaharthibhyoona deeyeate/ Dvaaminmau purushaa loke swargasyopari tishhatah, Anna pradaataa durbhikshe subhikshe hema vastradah/ (Shandalya Muni mentions that all types of charities be offered without being asked for and with clean conscience or with...
no view of securing returns; however Vidya, Kanya and Anna must not be offered without being asked for as a rule! Indeed, there are two types of charity givers who attain Swarga for sure: those who heartily give away Food during Durviksha and also those who happily give away gold and clothing during the days of general prosperity!\textit{Naalpatvam vaa bahutvam vaa daanasya abhyudaavaham, Shraddhaa Bhaktischa daanaanam vriddhikshayakare hite// Ishta dattam adheetam cha pranyanikirtanaat, Shlaaghaanu shochanaabhyam na vridhaa parikeertayet}/ Devala Maharshi clarifies: Charity given in small or large quantities is irrelevant but whatever is handed over with Shraddha bhakti or reverence and sincerity are given and the recipient too should truly desire and deserve it! Contrariwise, there might be negative impact! If charity given out of expectation of appreciation is futile but the result is really needful and genuinely appreciated then that type of charity goes a long way!) \textit{Samabrahmanyante daanam dvigunam braahmanbruve, pradheete shata sahasram anantam Veda paarage}/(Daksha Prajapati describes that charity to less deserving Brahmana has double the impact to that of one who is given to a genuine Brahmana; in case that very daana is given to a Pandita or a learned Brahmana; but indeed the charity to a Veda Pandita bestows Ananta Punya or of Lasting Fruits! Vyaasa Smriti elaborates the concept of Daana further: \textit{Svaantah krudddastamandhovaa kshutpipaasaah bhayaadhrithaa, daanan punyamakrutvaa cha prayaaschittam dinatrayam/Anaahateshu yaddhaanam yaccha duttam ayaachitam, bhavishyati yugassyaaantah tasyaantaato na bhavishyati}/ When a person gives away a charity to a quality Brahmana, while in a mental frame of tiresomeness, anger, ignorance, hunger, thirst or under compulsion, then sucha charity would be ineffective and warrants for a three day prayaschithta) The type of Daana that is offered by special invitation and that which is given when asked for has considerable difference till the end of yugas, but there is no end of the concept of daana ever!) \textit{Adrushte chaashubhe daanaam bhoktaa chaiva na drushythe, punaraagamanam naasti tatra daanaanantakam/} (Daana with the apprehension of having to face inauspiciousness to the donor is of artificial nature, but nishkaama daana with no expectation of return is of lasting value especially when the daana karta would request for ‘punaraagamana’ or please come again! \textit{Samam abraahmane daanam dvigunam Braahmana bruve, Sahasragum aacharye hyenanantam veda panditaai}/ (To give charity to an undeserving Brahmana is not out of order and minimal, and so is one who claims as Brahmana by birth, yet daana given to an Acharya is thousand times better but to a Veda Vidwaan daana, is stated to of endless fruits!) \textit{Maata pitrushu yadyayaad bhaaratrushu shvashureshuchaa, Jaayaapayeshuu yaddaayaaad sonatah svaraa samkramamh/Pituu shatagunam daanam sahasra Maaturuchyate Bhaginyaat shata sahasram sodare duttamakshyayat}/ (In the current times, what Veda Vyasa states is indeed applicable: Charity that is provided to parents, brothers and father-in- law, own wife and children would pave the way to heavens. If the charity that is given to father is hundred folded, that given to mother is thousand folded, to sisters it is of lakh times more and to brothers is countless!) \textbf{Samskaraas} 

\textit{Garbhaadaana Pumsavana Seemontonnayana Jaata karma naama karana annapraashhanaashchoulopa nayanam chatvaari Veda Vratuani snaatakam sahadharma chaarini samyogah, panchaanam yagjaanaamanushthaanam Deva pitru Manushya Bhuta braahmanaa meteshah cha Ashitakaa paarvanah Shraddham Shraavanyaagrahaayani Chaitraashvayuyeeti sapta paaka yajna samsthaa agnaadheyamagnihotram Dharma purna maasaagrayanam chaaturmaasyaani nirudha pashu bandhasoutraameetee saptaahavirayagina samsthaa/Agnishtomotyanishitona ukthyassshodashi vaajapeyati raatru apnoyami iti sapta soma samsthaa ityete chatvaarimshat samskaaraaah}
GARBHAADHAANA: Shosha riturnaanaashaa streenaam tasmin yugmaasu samvishet, Brahmacaar - yeva parvaanyaadyah chatasrascha varjayet/ (Yagnyavalkya instructs that husband and wife could copulate during fourteen ‘rithu’ nights, but during the ‘Parva dinas’ or days of Sacred Festivals and four days when she is in menses period the husband should practise celibacy only) Prathamehani chandali dviteeye brahmagahatabhi, tritiye rajaki proktaa chaturthihehi shudhyat/(Parashara describes the four days of menses period as those of chandali, brahmagahata, rajaki and shuddhya) Tisro raatree vratam charet praajaayai gopekshaaya/ (Shruti states that to secure progeny it is necessary to observe the Vrata for three nights) Nagacchedgarbhineem bharyaam malinaam sitamurdvalaam rogavatim naayonou na bubhuksheetaah, Siwastra veshadharayaa snaataayaa shuddha chitrayaa, Arogayaah dayitayaa svamevevidhah svapet/(Shandalya Muni totally negates the idea of union with carry unclean, white haired, diseased, reluctant and menstrous women, but endorses the woman who is well dressed, nicely bathed, clean and healthy and engagingly active.) Mithunibhutvaan shoucham prati vilambet/(Gautami Maharshi statesalertingly that after the act of union, both must clean without laziness) Prathamehani chandali dviteeye brahmagahatabhi, tritiye rajaki proktaa chaturthihehi shudhyat/(Parasha describes the four days of menses period as those of chandali, brahmagahata, rajaki and shuddhya) Tisro raatree vratam charet praajaayai gopekshaaya/ (Shruti states that to secure progeny it is necessary to observe the Vrata for three nights) Nagacchedgarbhineem bharyaam malinaam sitamurdvalaam rogavatim naayonou na bubhuksheetaah, Siwastra veshadharayaa snaataayaa shuddha chitrayaa, Arogayaah dayitayaa svamevevidhah svapet/(Shandalya Muni totally negates the idea of union with carry unclean, white haired, diseased, reluctant and menstrous women, but endorses the woman who is well dressed, nicely bathed, clean and healthy and engagingly active.) Mithunibhutvaan shoucham prati vilambet/(Gautami Maharshi statesalertingly that after the act of union, both must clean without laziness) Shashtyashtamim panchadashim dvadashim cha chaturdashim, Brahmacaarree bhavennityam tadvarjyatrayehani/(Kurma Purana requires abstinence on Shashthi, Ashtami, Purnimas, Amavasyas, Dwadashis, Chaturdashis)
mantras while a honey dipped gold is applied to the child’s tongue) *Kumara prasave naabhyaamacchi – mnaaayaam guda tila hiranya, Govastraa dhaaanya pratigrahasheva doshastadahariyeyeke/ (Shankha Maharshi expressed that even before severing the protruded navel, a mixture of jaggery, til,gold,cow product, clothing and pre-husked rice be applied) Jaate putre pituuh snaanam sachelantu vidheyate/ Raatre snaanetu sampraapte snaayaadanala sannidhou!(Samvarta Muni expresses that as soon as a son is born, the father of the newly born must take full bath even while wearing the same dress; in case the delivery takes place during the night hours, then the bath be performed before Fire as an evidence!)

NAAMAKARANA: Ahanyekaadashinaama charudhe maasi nishkramah, Sashtennapraashhanam maasi chudaakarmayathaakulam/ (Yagjnyavalkya instructs that pursuant to the new arrival, namakarana be done on the ekadashi of the fourth month; and anna prashana and chuda karam or removal of head hair at the birth time be observed during the sixth month as per one’s own family tradition) Sharmaanam Brahmanasyoktam Varmaanaam Gupta- Daasa padaantsousyadabhidhaa Vaishyashudra yoritiitutu/ (Ashvalaayana Maharshi suggested that the name of Sharma for Brahmanas, Varma for Kshatriyas, Gupta for Vaishyas and Daasa for others be duly incorporated for male issues) Streenaam sukhodyam akruram vispashthaardham manoaharam, Mangalyam deergha varnaantam aasheervaadaabhidaanavat/ (The names to be provided to a she-child must be easy to pronounce, unoffensive, meaningful, auspicious and the last word to be elongated, said Manu.)

ANNAPRAASHANA: Janmanodhi shashthe maasi brahmanaan bhojaitvaa aashishovaahayitvaa dadhi madhughrita modanamiti, Samsruya uttararairmantraah kumaaram praashayet/ (Aapastamba Sutra requires that food intake to a child be initiated by blessings and with a mix of honey,curd and ghee during a suitable day during the sixth month of the birth with appropriate mantras followed by Brahmana-bandhu bhojana)

CHUDAKARANA: Janmanodhi triteeyo varshe chaolam punarvasyaah iti Adhi triteetga ardhaadika triteeye// Soono maatari garbhinaam chudakarma nakaarayet// Soono Maatiar garbhinyaam chuda karma nakaarayet/ (While the former stanza by Aapastamba requires that the first hair-cut be executed either on the first or third year, the same be done to those born during the punarvasu after three months; Narada Brahmarshi states that in case of another confinement the samskara of the earlier birth be postponed)

STREE JAATA KARMA: Tooshnimetaah kriyaam streenaam vivaahastu samantrakah/ (Yajnyavalkya instructs that the Jaatakarma etc. for girls be done without mantras on informal basis, excepting in respect of weddings)

VIDYARAMBHA: Praapetu panchame varshe hyaprasupte janaardane, Shasthim pratipadam chaivavarjayitvaa tathaashtamim/ Riktam panchadasheem chaiva Sourabhouna dinetathaa, evam sunischite kaale vidyaarambhattu kaarayet// (On the attainment of five years, Vidyahhyaasa be initiated on an auspicious time, leaving however the Chaturmaasya viz. from Sukla Ekadashi Ashadha till Kartika Shukla Ekadashi as also avoiding Shasthi, Prathama, Ashtami, Rikta, Pournami and Amavasya besides Sundays and Tuesdays.)

ANUPANEETA DHARMA: Jaata maatraah shishustaavadyaava dashtasamaavayaah, Sopi garbhasamojjevo vyakti maatra prakaashitah/ Bhakshyaa bhyakshe tathaapeyo vaachaavaachhya
tathaanrite Asminkaalena doshosti kriamaanairgarhitaih/ (Daksha Prajapati observed that a child should be considered as an unborn kid till eight years of age; till then there are issues valid like eating or drinking materials worthy of consumption or not, nor what is right to talk by way of truth and untruth.) Tathaapi shashthaadvarshaatpraageva kaamaacharaadidrashtavyam, Tatah param pitraadibihh varnadharmeshu niyoktavyah/ Na brahmaabhivyaahaarayet anyatra svathaa ninaayanaat iti/(Mitaakshara felt that even before the sixth year, the elders should notice the faculties and habits of the children and accordingly instruct and train them to the right ways, thoughts and actions as per the Varna Dharmas. Yet, till such time that ‘upanayana’ has not been completed, the boys should recite Veda Mantras although Apara Karma mantras of parents be encouraged to be learnt and practised.) Paraashara Smriti details Anupaneeta Dharmas as follows: Praagupanayata karmaachaarakaama vaada manaadyaacharo naasti/ Laghupataaka hetulashuna paryushitoccvhishtaadi bhakshae doshaabhaavah/ (Before the Upanayana samskaara, a person might be in the practice of unbridled behaviour of speech, action, eating habits, lack of purification of body parts, ignoring blemishes of eating and drinking forbidden food like garlic- mix, lefr over and polluted food, casual way of speaking untruth, carrying taes, even meat meeting, conacting women in mens and keeping company with bad elements!)

UPANAYANA: The Sacred Act of Upamnayana is a clear water-shed of the life of the three Varnas of Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya. The term of Upanayana is defined as : Guhyotta karmaana yena sameepam neeyate Guru, Baalo Vedaaya tadyogaad Baalasyopanayam viduh/ (Upanayana literally means that a Guru sits in the physical and visual presence of a boy and initiates Vedas such as yogas in the Form of Gayatri Mantra. Now the Guru who performs the Upanayana is stated as father, paternal grand father, father’s brother, elder brother, or Sagotra sapindaka or close paternal relatives, maternal uncle or Agotra Sapinda or Sagotra Asapinda. The Purohita or Shrotritya in whose presence the Upanayana is to be performed by the Guru is defined: Guhyotta karmaana yena sameepam neeyate Guroh, Baalo Vedaaya tadyogaad Baalasyopanayam viduh/ (A Brahmana by birth becomes a dvija after the Samskaaraas like upanayana are applied to him; he then becomes a vipra once he is a learned person; only then a Brahmana becomes a Shrotriya; He who is eligible to perform as this Shroti should have recited Gayatri Mantra twelve times of thousands each! Garbhashtameshu brahmanamupanayeeta, Garbhekaada sheshu Raajanyam, garbha dvadasheshu Vaisyam, Vasanto greeeshmah sharadityutsavo varnaan purvenu iti/ (Apastamba Sutra states that upanayana be performed by the eighth year to Brahmanas, eleventh year to Kshatriyas and twelfth year to Vaishyas; the suitable Seasons for performing Upanayana are Vasanta,Greeeshma and Sharad Seasons repectively) Aashodhashaad Brahmanasya Saavitri naativartate, Advaaivishaat Ksahtra bandhora chaturviveshatervishah/ (Manu Smriti requires that the outer limits to leave as Brahmacharis without upanayana should be sixteen years to Brahmanas, twenty two to Kshatriyas and twenty four to Vaishyas) Atra urthvam Savitri patitaavratyaassyyuh, teshaaam cheerna praayaschittaanaam upanayaav- dayassuh iti/ (In case upanayana dates exceed as above then Savitri patitaavrataa be executed and ‘prayaschitta’ be performed formally as an apology, clarififes ‘Srivityardha Saara’!)

Patita Savitrikah uddaaka vratam charat, Dvou maasou aamikshyaava Aasha raatram ghrite, Shadraatram ayyachitam trirataramanna bhikshah, Ahoraatram upavaset Ashvamedhaavabridham vaagacchet vraayastomenavva yaage/ (Those who step beyond the age limits should not only perform the Patita Savitri Vrata but also Uddalaka Vrata by consuming raw cheese for two months, eight nights only with ghee, six nights with whatever is food available as unsolicited, three nights plain cooked rice, and one full day and night without any thing to consume; moreover, one also has to accomplish the...
ashvamedha yajna phala or Vratyastoma yaga! This is the instruction of Vasishtha of the age limits of Upanayana are crossed! Yagnopaveetam: *Kaarpaasamupaveetam syat viprasyordhvavritam trivrit, Shonasutramayam raagino vaisasyavika sutrakam* (Manu Smriti describes the three types of Yagnopaveetam viz. that made of raw cotton for Brahmans, red thread made of horse hair and sheep hair thread for Vaishyas) *Yagnopaveetam kurveeta sutramtu navatantukam, Trishta dhuravatvam kaayam tantutrayamadhovritam* (Maadhavayam states that yagnopveeta should be of nine sutras, as three threads made of each cluster, of which three such clusters are woven up and three more of such clusters are woven down.) *Upaveetam vatorekam dvetadhetarayoh Smritao, Ekameva yateenaam syaaditi shastrasya nishchayah* / *Triteeyam uttareeyam syadvastraabhave tadipyate// Sadopaveetinaa bhaavyam sadaabuddha shikhen cha, Vishokhunopaveeta -scha yakaroti natatrutam/* (Bhrgu Maharshi instructs one Yagnopaveeta that for Vatus, to others two and to Yatis one; the third thread serves as Uttareeya or the upper cloth to cover the bare body. One should always were yaginopaveeta with veneration and any ‘Satkarma’ or deed of virtue is valid only by wearing it with respect; similarly a tuft too is a must to perform Karmas lest these are called Rakshasa Karmas otherwise!) As an integral part of Upanayana, ‘Danda Dharana’ is required. Manu Smriti states as follows: *Brahmano bailva paalaasho kshatriyo vaata khaadiraa, Paippaloutumbarou Vaishyah dandaa narhanti dharmatah/* The danda or stick be made of bilva or palaasha trees for Brahmaan vatus, for kshatriyas vata or khadira while for Vaishya vatus the danda be made of Pippala orAddumbura trees. Vyasa gives the specifications: *Shiro lalaatnaa saagraa pramaana yupavannataah* / (The danda should be of the size of the Vatu’s head, or forehead or nose in the shape of the wooden piece holding the Sacrifice Animal tight) Another material required would be ‘Vastrajina’ or a pair of clothes one as actual body garment and another as loin cloth: Vasishtha Muni prescribed white cotton cloth for draping Brahmaan boys, munji grass woven cloth for kshatriyas and Kusha darbha woven cloth for Vaishyas while a similar loin cotton cloth to all the three classes. Besides an upper covering be worn by all as krishnajina or the dried and treated skin of deer. Manu prescribed a ‘kati sutra’ or loin thread: *Mounji trivrit samaashlaokshou karya viprasya mekhala, Kshatriyasu mourveejyaa vaishvasya shaanaataantavi ie, three stringed mounji grass material to Brahmanas, twisted string made of mourvi material and to Vaishyas a shaana made string. Samvarta stated that without a kati sutra, no male is qualified to perform Shrouta Smaarta Karyas! Manu Smriti instructs that without kati sutra, danda, yagnopavita, kamandala with water be secured as soon as possible!)

**Brahmachari Dharmas:** Manu prescribed the following Brahmachari dharmas: *Prati grihyepsitamandam upatshaaya cha Bhaskaam, Pradakshinam pareetyaanim charjet bhaikshyam yadhavidhi/Bhavatpuram charedbhaitshyam upaneeti dvijottamam, Bhavanadhityatu Rajanya Vaishyastu bhavaduttaram/ Bhaikshena vratayennityam naivaanannyaahi bhavedvratii, Bhaikshena vratinovrittih upavaasa samaasrutaa / Samaahatyatu tadbhaitsham yaavadardharmamayaaya, Nivedya guraveshneeyaat achamya prangmukhah shukhiih/* (A Brahmachari should first worship Surya deva with his danda as also perform pradakshina or circumambulation around Agni and proceed for bhikshaatana. A dvija must use the expression of ‘bavati bhikshaam dehi’ while a kshatriya should say ‘bhiksham bavati dehi’ and a Vaishya brahmachari should utter ‘bhiksham dehi bhavati’. While requesting for ‘bhiksha’, only that much of bhiksha be solicited and not to hoard for another day; if bhiksha is accepted in larger quantity than one’s requirement, then that is considered as worse than an upavasa without returns. What ever is so cooked is accorded to guru as naivedya and eaten quietly facing the east) Vasishtha defined that Sages shoud consume eight fistfuls, Vana vasis or forest dwellers sixteen fist fulls, Grihastas thirty two while
Brahmacharis with no limits. Jaimini Maharshi’s instruction is: *Yaavadbrahmopadeshastu taavat sandhyadi kanchana, tato madhyaaahna sandhyaaadi sarvakarma samaacharet/Aarabhedbrahma yanjanantu madhyaahentu parehani/ (Till such time Brahmapdesha is not executed, Sandhyavandana etc. are not required, but all the deeds including the afternoon and evening like Brahmayagjna need to be executed. Manu Smruti also requires the following to follow:Dooradaakahritiya samidhah sannidhyaad vihaayasi, Saayam praatascha juhuyaat taabhiragniratandrithaah/ Naprokshita mindhanam agnaaadaa – dhyaat/Agneendhanam bhaiksyha chayaadmadhasshhayaam Gurhitam, Aasamaavartanaat kuryaat kritopanyodvijah/ Choditogurunaanityam aprachodita yevavaa, kuryaadadhyayane yhatnam Acharyasya hiteshu cha/ Shareeram chaiva vaacham cha buddheendriya manaamsi, Niyyyama praanjali stishthedveekshamano gururumukham/ Nityamudhrita paanisyaat saadhyvachaaraah samaaahitah, Anya -taami iti chokthah sanneaaseesthabhinukham Guroh/ Guroryatra pareevgaadah nindaavaapi prayujjyate, Karnoutatrapi dhaatavavou gantavyam vaatonyataah/ (Samidhas or the wooden pieces be fetched and duly dried with which homa karyas in the mornings be executed after ‘samprokshana’ or water sprinkled with mantras and no homa karya be done without prokshana. All the dvijas after upanayana are required to observe agni karyas, bhikshatana, sleeping on the ground, and complete the vidyaabhyayaas from the Guru; what ever is taught by Guru, self taught or acquired is recited and absorbed. He should always follow Guru’s instructions with no exception by totally surrendering by way of his physique, tongue, mind, and thought and seeing him with rapt attention and folded hands. Being ready to observe every action and movement of the Guru the student should be ready to follow each and every utterance. Let alone any confrontation with the Guru but any ‘Guru Ninda’ or criticism by a third party be abhored by closing his ears, if not defended against or just leave the place!) Varjayen madhu maasaaanigandhmaaliyaa rasaam shriyah,Shukraani chaiva sarvaani praaninaam chaiva himsanam/ Abhyanga manjanam chaakshhyoh upaanacchatra dhaaranam, Kaamam krodham cha lobhamchanartanam geetaa fvaadanam, Dyutam chan parivaadam cha jana vatam tathaaniyam. Streenaamaa prekshaanaalambhamupaghaatam parasyache/ (The Bramachari must abstain from consuming meat and alcohol, scents and fragrances, feminine influences, oil baths, footwear, umbrellas, dance and music, betting, anger and selfishness, unhutfulness, and any kind of excesses). Dharma shastrantu vijnryam shabda shastram tathaiva puranaani Iti haasascha tathaiva puranaani chastraahyaa tvevam Brahma lokamsamashnute/ Utpaadya putram samskrutchya veyam adyaapya yah pitaah/ (Chaandrika suggests learning and hearing Dharma Shastras, Shabda Shastras, Purananas, Itihaasas, Akhyanaas, Mahatma Charitas etc. always.) Upaadhyaayah pitaajyeshtho bhraataa chaiva Mahipathi, Maatulah shivasurah kraataa maataa mahapitaanmahah Varna shreshtho pitruvyaschaa pumsyate guravah smritaah/ Maata Maataamahaa Gurvi Pitruvyascha sodaryaah, Svashruh pitaamahyaa jyeshthaah dhaati cha guravah smritaah/ Iyyukto Guruvayuram Maatruthah Pitruvyadvihaa, Gurunaamapii Sarveshaam puyaah pancha visheshahah/ Yobhaavayati yassuteeyena vidyopadishyate, Jyeshtha bhraataa cha bhartaa cha panchaita guravah smitaah/ (Devala Maharshi defines Gurus or respectful teachers and revered elders and well wishers: among males: teachers, father, paternal grand father, father’s elder brothers, Kings, paternal uncle, father in law, life savers, maternal grandfather, paternal uncles, elder brothers and so on; among females: mother, grand mothers, Guru’s wife, maternal and paternal aunts , elder sisters and so on.Like wise all elders on maternal and paternal side and from among the side of Guru; most significant Gurus are those who have given birth, existence, Guru who has provided knowledges and elder brother) Manu states: *Imam lokam Maatrubhaktyaa pitru bhaktyatu madhyamam, Guru shashushrayaa tvevam Brahma lokamsamashhunet/ Utpaadya putram samkrutya vedamadhyayaapya yah pitaah, Kuryaadvrittim cha sa mahaar guruh puyatamah smritaah/ (All the brahmacharis are blessed in
this present life by their mothers, with devotion to their fathers in the Pitru loka; the father who gave birth, provided training, Veda knowledge and job opportunity needs to be acknowledged as the ‘Maha Guru’ or the Highest Teacher and the most worshipworthy!)

Vyasa on the other hand exclaims: *Maasaan dashodarastham yhaadhritvaa shulasamakaalaa. Vedanaa vividhair duhhkhair prasuyeta vimurchita/ Praanairapi priyaan putraan manyate sutavatalaa, kastasyaa nishkrutim shakto varshashatairapi/* (Who could redeem the debt of for hundred of years by carrying ten months in her womb, experiencing most severe pains like of ‘shulas’ and finally giving birth by sheer torture tightly holding the the edges of ‘Pancha Pranas’ besides bringing up with extraordinary care, sheer dedication and selfless love!)

Pandhaadeyaa brahmanaaya gave raagnhya chakshushe, Vriddhata Bhara tptaaya garbhinyah durbalayachaa/ (Bodhaayana prescribes that Brahmachaaris ought to help vipras, cows, the blinded including the shorsighted kings, the old aged, those carrying lot of weight, the expectant mothers and the helpless!)

**Manu states:** *Abhivaadana sheelasya nityam vriddhopasevinah, chatvaaritasya vardhaa hyaayuh pragjaanashobalam/ (Those Brahmacharis who greet elders, especially the aged would attain blessings viz. longevity, assertive ability, reputation and physical strength.) Smriyardhasaareupasangahanaa naama amuka gotrah Devadattaamahambhoo abhivaadaye ityuktaa karnou sprushvtaa dakhshinena uttaana paaninaa guruh dakhinam paadam savyaa savyam griheetvaa shirovanamanam/ (Upakramana is described as announcing one’s own gotra and name, greet the Guru, touch the ears of the self, bend to touch the feet of the right foot of the Guru with right hand of the self with bent of own’s own head, when the Guru blesses saying: Ayushmaan bhava- ssoomyaa!)

**Upakarma:** Pratyabdham yadupaakarmanasotsarga vidhivadvaayiaah Kriyate chhanda saaantena punara – apyaayanan param/ (Katyayana says that along with upakarma, daana dharmas too are accorded then Vedas are doubly satisfied) *Paarvanyoudayii kuryuh shraavanyaaam Taittireeyakaakah, Bahrachaah shravanychaiva graha samkraanti varjite/ ( Gargya states that Taittiriyaas perform Upakarma in the early morning of Shravana Purnima and Bahruchas or Rigvedis perform the same on a day when there is no graha samkramana during Shravana month) Parvanoudayii kuryuh shraavanyaaam Taittiriyaakah, Bahruchaah shravanakshe hastakshe Saama vedinah/ (Gokhila states that Taittiriyaas perform Upakarma in the morning of Shravana Purnima, Rigvedis in Shravanankshatra and Saama Vedis in hasta nakshatra.)

The substance of the above interpretations is the same that Upakarma be performed on Shravana Purnima. Tithi Darpana states: *Aoudayii sangavasparshe Shrutaao parvaniachaarkam, Kuryur – nabhasyaapakarman Rigyajussaamaaagaah kramaat/ (If Surya grahaan touches Pournami morning in Shravana month then Rigyajussaama Vedis should perform Upakarma.) Rigyajussaamaaatharvveshhaa Jeeya shukra kujendujaah, Kaalatrpayeei doshetu shraavanyaamevaakaarayet/ (Rig-Yajur-Saama-Atharva Vedis should preferably perform Upakarma on Thursday,Friday, Tuesday and Mondays ; however if this is not possible, Upakarma be performed during Shravana month only.) Shandilya Muni’s instruction is: Aadra vaasaanakurveeta karma kinchit kadhanchana, Raakshasam tadviynem tasmaadadanyitena varjyayet/ Upaveetaadi dharyam Upakarmani tannamvam, Anavamvaa navam vaapi puraattana miha - tyajeyt/ (Upakarma or any small deed of auspiciousness be never performed by wearing wet clothes as that tantamounts to Rakshasa Karma and be avoided certainly. New yagjnopaveeta be worn for the purpose!)

**Vivaaha:** Adheetya vidhivadvedam Vedardhamabhidhigamycha, Vrataani kramashah kriyvaam samwartana- macchharet/ Vedamekam samabhisyasa krivaa Vedavrataanichaa, Gurave dakshinaamdhatvaapya shaktastadanuginjaaya/Samaavarityodvahetkanyaam sanyasmathavaa vrajeyt/ ( Veda Vyasa explains as follows: A brahmachari having completed Vedaabhyaasa after absorbing the meaning of Vedas should
execute ‘Samavartana’; proficiency in one Veda be achieved on completing training, receive formal blessings from Guru, give Guru dakshina and execute ‘samavartana’ formally as the introductory step to vivaha. [The word Samavartana basically means taking snaana and achieving approval to perform three snaatakas viz.Vidya snaataka, Vrata snaataka and Paripurorna snaataaka; the brahmachari then completes Upanayanadiksha, Savitri vrata diksha and Vidya Vrata-dikshobhya snaataaka.] Vainaveem dharaye drishti mantarvaasastadhottareem, Yagnopaveetadvitayam sodakam cha kamandalam/Chatram choshitha malalam aaduecha pyupaanahou roukmecha kundale Vedam kritta keshanakhassuchithi/ Svadhyaaeye nitya yuktassyadbaahir maalamcha dhaarayeret, Shuklaambaro nityam sugandhah priyadarshanah/ (The prospective bridegroom should sport danda, koupee, uttrareya, twin yagjnopaveeta, kamandal with water, umbrella, headgear, paaduka or footwear, silver earrings, Veda, with neat hair and nails and engaged in Svadhyaaaya, necklaces, clean clothes and all in all be as a presentable personality.) Manu differentiated eight types of Vivahas: Braahmodaivastadaivaarshah praajaapatyastathaasurah, Gandharvo raakshasaschaiva paishaachoshtamothamah/ (Brahma vivaha is defined as inviting a person well versed in Veda vidya and good family background and performing Kanya daana in the typically traditional manner is Brahma Vivaha. Such ideal wedding would redeem ten generations in the past and twenty generations of pitru devatas by the son resulting in such a noble wedding. A ritvija who would have performed extensive yagna karyas offering a well behaved daughter is called Daiva Vivaha. If one or two gom-dhunas or considerations are accepted from the bridegroom and a wedding is performed, then that type of wedding is called ‘Arsha Vivaha’. If both the bride and bridegroom like each other and elders too consider the wedding as is per tradition and thus are agreeable, then that type of wedding is named Praajaapatya.) Brahmaadishu vivaaheshu chatushvevaanu purvashah, Brahmavarchashvinah putraah jaayante shishta sammataah/Rupa satvagunopetaah dhavanvantoyashasvinah, Paryaapta bhogaah dharmsithhaah jeevanticha shatam samaah/ Itareshu tu nirshamsaanrita vaadinah, Jaayante durvi -vaaheshebrahmadharmanavishvashah sutaah/Brahhma-Daara-Aasha-Praajaapatyavivahas shall certainly be good successes resulting on the progeny of brightness and behaviour; indeed they would be of virtue, presentability, wealthy, reputed and happy with longevity oh hundred years of healthy life. But, the children born of disapproved weddings would be Asatyavadis or untruthful, nonviruous and evilminded) Yagnyavalika prescribes the criteria for choosing a woman for wedding: Avipluta brahma charyo lakshanyaam striya mudvahet, Ananya purvikaam kaantaam asapindaamyaveeyaseem/Arogineem bhratrutatin asamaarsha gotrajaam,Panchamaat saptamaadurdhvaam maatrutah pitrutastadhah/ (Any disciplined Brahmachari deserves to wed a well featured, unmarried or already carrying woman, younger in his age with good health with unquestioned family background with different Rishis of five generations from her parents side and of different gotras for seven generations). Shataatapa Munif further prescribes: Hamsvaraaam meghavarnaad madhu pingalalochanaam, Taadrusheem varayan kanyaam grihastah svayamethate/(The bride is preferred with sonorous voice of a swan, cloud coloured and honey eyed). Vishnu Maharshi states that if a domestic horse is required to be passed by a father, a bride needs to the
examined by the groom’s mother, a just as the earth has to approve of the grass and the ‘Kula’ or caste has to be tested by tradition: *Ashvam pitraa parikshet maatraa kanyaam pareekshayet, Trinaad Bhumim pareeksheta Aachaarena kulam tadheti* / Vishnu Muni further says: *Brahmanasya kulam graahyam Savedaa na cha sampadah, Kanyaadaane tatha vshaaradhee na vidyaa tatrakaaranam* / (Indeed, Brahman is signified by his ‘Kulaachara’ or his family tradition but not his wealth, just as in the context of ‘shraaddha karma’, high standard of vedic knowledge is not a necessary criterion!) *Kulam cha sheelam cha vapurvaayacha vidyaam cha vittam sanaadhataamcha, Etaani gunaassapta parikhshya kanyaadeeyaa budhaah sheshamchintaneeyam/Vivaaham chopaneeyam streenaam aahapitaamah, Tasmad garbaaashtamashreshthho janmatovaashtavatsarah/ Maataaachaiva Pitaaachaiva Jyeshthho bhraataaa tathaiavcha, Trayaste narakam yaantii drushtwaa kanyaam rajaswalaam/* / (Yama Dharma Raja decides that seven major characteristics be signified in the context of Kanyadaana viz. Kula or family, Sheela or one’s own conduct, Rupa or Physical appeal, Vayas or age, Vidya or level of learning, Vitta or wealth and, Sanaadhata or good parentage and relatives. Yama further suggested that what Upanayana is important to males is as significant as the institution of wedding to females.) Recalling the Section of Stree Dharma aforementiond as of Samvarta’s caution that a Rajasvala if unmarried at the age of about ten years then the parents would visit Rourava Naraka, Shaunaka Maharshi prescribed the procedure of ‘prayashchitta’ or atonement to such Kanyas before the wedding: *Kanyaam ratumateem shuddhaam krutvaa nishkruti maatmana, Pitaa rututsva putryaastu ganayedaaditah sudheeh/ Daanaavadhi gruhe yattraaplaalayet charojavateem sudheeh,Dadyaattadritu samkhyagaagah Kanyaa pitaa yadi/ Daata - vyakaapi yatena daane tasyaa yadhavaa, Dadyaadvaa brahmaneshvannamati nisvah sadakshinam/ Tasyaateetartu samkyheshu varaay pratipaadayet, Upshyaa tridinam Kanyaay taatrou gavaam payah/ Adrushta rajase dadyaadkanyaayai ratnabhushanam,Taamudwanvaraschaapi kushmaandaairjhuuyaat ghritam/ (The father has to recount the number of times that the Kanya has had menses and give away charity of as many cows (or equivalent) from the father as also treat a good number of Brahmans for ‘bhojana’ and the wedding. The bride neds to take fast for three days and consume milk in the nights. The bridgroom has to perform Kushmanda Homa with ghee in turn. Now General Regulations pertaining Vivaha are as follows: *Eka maatru prasutaanam ekasmin vatsdareyadi vivaahonaiva kartavyonirgatetu rututraye graamaantarepi kartavyah kartavyo naikaveshmani,Desha bhedaaatulaachaaraadime Dharmaa prakeerititaath/ Sodarey tishthati jyeshthae na kuryaaadaaara samgraham, Anavasyam tathaa dhaanam patitastvanyathaa bhavet/ (The daughters of same mother should not be wedded in the same year; however, if three menses of the girls have been completed then the weddings could be performed at different places but not in the same house. In case there is an unwedded sister in the home, the brother should not go in for his wedding) Atri Muni stressed: *Janmaka Janmaa divasi Jannamaaase subham tyajet, Jyeshtha maasyaadya garbhashubham varijam striyaa api/ (No auspicious deeds be performed on one’s own birth star, birthday and month of birth; during Jyeshtha month, auspicious deeds be also avoided for women if in expectant stage. ) Vyasa Maharshi emphasised that during the Chaturmasya period, no auspicious deeds be performed including Upanayana, Vivaha or celebrations since that is Vishnu’s ‘shayana / utthaana kaala’: *Vishnoh prasvaapanotthana madhenaiopanaanam, Vivaaham naiva kurveetanaiva kuryaanmahotsavam/ Devala Maharshi forbids: Devotsave pravritetu manushyotsavo matah tasmin graame na kurveeta/* / (No celebrations pertaining to human beings like weddings and such when ‘Utsavas’ or celebrations of Devas are there are in progress)
Brahma muhurte buddheta Dharmaardhaovanuchintayet, Kaayeleshaamscha tanmulaan Veda tatvaardhamevacha/ (Manu prescribes that one should rise from the bed at Brahma Muhurta, cogitate about Dharma-adharms, one’s own physical weakness, their causes and remedies and the Veda ‘Tatvaarththa’) Brahme muhurte yaa nidraasaa punya khsaya kaarini/ (Not waking up at Brahma Muhurta would be an infringement of Punya) Vishnu Purana defined Brahma Muhurta:

Not waking up at Brahma Muhurta would be an infringement of Punya Vishnu Purana defined Brahma Muhurta:

Raatrena paschima yaamaasya muhurto yastrutiyakah, sa Brahmaa iti vigneyo vighah sa prabodhane/ Pa

Brahma Muhurta is from 4.08 am to 4.56 am and Ushodaya or Sunrise is at 5.44 am. The first view that a person on opening eyes is the right palm saying:

Karaagr e vasate Lakshmi karamadhye Sarasvati, Karamule sthito Brahma prabaate karadarshanam/

Lakshmi on top of the palm fingers, Sarasvati in the middle of the palm and Brahma at the bottom of the palm) Vishnu Purana also states: Uthoayoththaaya bodhavyam kimadya sukrutam, Datta vaadaitapat vaapi vaaksatyaavaapi bhashita/ Utthaayo -ththaaya bidhavyam mahad bhayamupasthitam, Maranam vyaadhi shokaanaam kimady a niptishyati/ (On rising the first thoughts should be to cogitate about that day’s program such as which virtuous tasks be performed like a charity to be done or organised, resolve to be truthful and renew the fear and faith in Almighty that everybody is ever prone to the vicissitudes of life like disease, distress and death!)

Vishnu Purana further states that one should pray to Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara, Surya, Angaaraka, Budha, Guru, Shukra, Shani and Rahu Ketus to bless them; and like wise invoke Bhriugu, Vasishtha, Kratu, Angirasa, Manu, Pulasya, Pulaha, Gautama, Raunyta, Marishi Chyavana, Daksha; Sanatkumara, Sanandana, Sanaatana, Aasuri Samha, Sapta Swaras, Saptha Sapta Rasaalas, Sapta Samudras, Sapta Parvatas, Sapta Rishis, Sapta Dvipas, Bhumi, Kurma, Sapta bhuvanas, Bhumi with gandha, Water with rasa,Vayu with sprarsha, Agni in flames, Sky with shabda or sound, Mahat with Suprabhata, and glory to Earth, cows, Saraswati, Keshava, Dharma Raja , Devi Sita and Janardana. Shandilya Muni suggests:

Ucchaaih svarena yah praatahstotu micchedananyaadheeh, Vaasudevaadi naaanaam naama samkeertanam charet/ Shrotriayam Shubhagam gaamcha hyagni magni chitam cha, Praatarathhaya ya yathadaapabhyassapramuchyate/ ( One should take Vaasudevaadi naamas in the early hours of the morning loud the naama ‘sankeertana’ of Vaasudeva. One should also view a Shrotriya, Satpurusha, Cow, Agni and Bhasma to ensure that the day ahead would be hassel free).

Soucha Vidhi: Divaa sandhyaasu karnasha Brahma sutra udammukhah, kuryaassutra purushetu tatrou chedakshinaa mukhah/ (Yagnyavalkya suggested that both during the morning and evening, the ablutions be done with one’s yagnopaveeta be worn around the ear facing towards south in nights and in the the norh in the day time) Angira Muni prescribes: Kritvaas mutra purishamvaa yadhaa -naivodakam bhavet, Snaatvaa labhdodakah paschaat sachelam tu vishudhyati snaanam/ kritvaa Ardraavaasaastu vinmature kuruteyadi, Praanayaamaramayam kritvaa purushaanena shudhyati/ Tailaabhyange tathaa vaantao kshurakarmani maithune, Anachachayottaran viprastriraatramashuchir bhavet/ ( In case there is no access to water for ablation, then later ‘sachela-snaana’ along with discarding clothes to be done thereafter to self purify one’s self. Later, after discarding the earlier clothes ‘Shudda Snaana’ be formed and there after, perform three prana yaamas. Similarly after oil maaasge and hair cut too a Vipra should perform three Praanaa Yamas) Manu states: Na mutrapathi kurveeta na bhasmani na govraje Vaayavayginm vipramaaditiyam apah pashyamsthavagaaam/ Na kadaachana kurveeta vinmutrasaya visarjanam, Na phaalakushte najalena chityaam nachaparvate/ Na jeerna Devaayatane na valmeeeke kadaachana, Na
Ablutions are prohibited to be performed in water flows, ash, with cows around, facing Fire, in between plough draggings, facing cows, mountains, dilapidated temples, pits with snakes or other beings, while standing, walking, on river beds, facing Agni, Sun, Moon, Dvijas etc. as such acts would retard mental capabilities.) Also while wearing footwear, umbrellas, and facing ‘Gobrahmana strees’, one’s ablutions be avoided. Devala Maharshi prescribes Shuddhi as follows:

Also while wearing footwear, umbrellas, and facing ‘Gobrahmana strees’, one’s ablutions be avoided. Devala Maharshi prescribes Shuddhi as follows:

Gandusha Vidhi: Kritvaadha shoucham prakshaalya hastou cha mrijjalaih, nibaddha shikhacchastu gandushaachamanan charet//Viprasya dakshine bhaage devaastishthanti nityashah, Aassena yevagandushaan Vaama bhaage visarjayet/Apaam dwadasha gandushaan purushotsarjane dwijan,

Achamana Vidhi: Prakshalya paadou hastou cha mukhamadbhissamaa hitah, Dakshinam baahumuddhrutyakrutvaa jaanvantaare karou, Aachamya praangmukhah pashchaaddanta dhaavaa maacharet//Dakshinam karam kritvaa gokarnaakritivat punah, Trih pibed dakshinaambu dviraasyam parimarjatet/Samhataangulinaa toym grieheetvaa paaninnaa dwijan, Muktaangushtha kanishhtetu sheshena achama-nam charet/Musha majjana maatraastu sangrahya trih pidepah/Vyasa delineates the Achamana Vidhi in detail: wash the hands, legs, and face, slowly raise the right hand seated east faced and clean the teeth with water and perform ‘achamana’; drink water from the cup shaped right hand palm thrice and clean up the face twice over; take water from the right palm with closed fingers thrice over and with the the three right palm fingers leaving the thumb and the little finger, sip water thrice of the small size of a ‘maasha’ seed or black gram and this is the process of ‘Achamana’.

Anushtaadvibhir apenaabhiradhbhisterena dharma vat, Shouchepsu sarvadaceakamedekaante praanmukhah/ Hridgaabhi puyate viprah kanthagaabhistu bhumipah, Vaishyadvibhi prashtaaabhistu shudrassapriththaabhirantah/( Manu suggests that while doing bath in a water body, one should be clean standing at a place which is warm,
preferably inside water without froth and alone faced either east or north. A Vipra could dip and stand in water upto heart level, a Kshatriya upto neck, a Vaishya up to the mouth level while others could bathe standing upto the buttocks! Na bahurjaanuraachame t naa sanasthona chotthitah, Bhukvaa-
naasthopya achaame anya kaale kadaachana/Naanteerayaika deshasya krutvaachavottareeya kam, Aacchanna daksinaam sastu naachaametthu kadaahanah/ Vinaa yaginopaveetena tathaadhoutena vaasanaa,
Muktvaav shikhaam vaachantena kritisvai va punah kriya/Yaabhya prayagmu khatvena kritama - achamanam yadi, Praayas- chityai tadaa kuryaat snaanaaamachamanam kramaat/ (‘Achamana’ is required to be performed without being seated or stretching hands outside the knees. Only after bhojana, one can seated on a seat but not otherwise. Achamana should not be done with dhoti or the main garment and the upper garment together, or covering the right shoulder. Without yagnopaveeta and open up the tuft while performing ‘achamana’ is banned. Achamana should not be performed west faced and if so done prayaschitta or atonement is required by taking bath and perform ‘Punara-achamana’)- Taavannaapa -sprushed vidvaan yaavadvaa-
menana sprushet, vaamehi Dwaadashaadityyaah Varunaascha Jaleshwaraaah/ Kaamse paatre chayattoyam yattoyam taamra bhaajane, Souvamnam raujate chiva naivaashuddham tu karhichiti/ (Yama Dharma Raja mentions that learned persons are aware that they are restrained to touch the left side of the body as that side Dwaadashadityas, Varunas and Jaleshwara are there; he further certifies that water in the vessels of bronze, copper, silver and gold are pure) Manu Shastra describes about Brahma and other Tirthas: Braahmena vipraasteerthena niyakalamupaspreshutet, Kaayatraidhaabhyaaam vaana pitrena kadaachana/ Angushtha mulasya tale Braaham teertham prachakshate, Kaayamanguli moolegre Daivam Pitryam taylorathah/ (One should be in touch with Brahma Tirtha and three sides of one’s body regularly although the Pitru Tirtha be touched occasionally. Brahma Tirtha exists at the right thumb bottom, Agni Tirtha at the finger bottoms, Daiva Tirtha on the top of the fingers and Pitru Tirtha under the fingers)

Shounaka Muni prescribes the procedure of Achamana: Prakshaalya paadou hastoucha tripibed -ambu veekshitam, Maashamagnantu tadvaari hridgatantu vishudhyati/Samvitraangushtha mulena vidvih pramruujaattadhoshthakou, Sangulaambhiih samyak avaacheenah sprushenmukham/ Angushthaanaa - mikaambhyaaantu chakshushi samupaspreshutet, Angushthena pradeshinyaaghraanaam sprushhyad ananta - ram/ Kanishthikayaangushthena shrotrou samyagupasprushettatah, Andushtha madhyamaabhyaaantu baahu samyak sprushet/ Angushthaagrena naa bhintu hrdayam tisribhistatah, Sarvaabhistu shirah paschaat evamaachamanam charet/ Jaanorurthvam jale tishtthanaahantah shuchiyaamiyaate, Adhastaa -chhata krutvopisamaachaanto na shudhyati/ (After washing hands and feet, consume a drop of water from the right palm thrice to clean up one’s heart and soul, clean up the thumb twice, touch the face with all the fingers together westward. Touch the eyes with thumb and ring finger, then touch the thumb and the pointing finger with nose, the thumb and the smallfinger with ears, thumb and the middle of all other fingers touch hands; thumb and navel; heart with three fingers and finally touch the head with all the fingers and perform Achamana finally. Till the time of Achamana , one should be seated in water upto knees and in the same position perform hundred achamanas for shuddhi or pure cleanliness.) Paraashara Maharshi describes: Prabhaasaadeeni tirthhaani Gangaadyaassaritastathaa, Viprasya Dakshine karne santeeti manurabraveet/ Adityo Varunah Somah Vahnirvaayustadaivachaa, Viprasya Dakshine karne nityam tishtthanti devataah/ (Prabhasa and such other Tirthas and Ganga and other Sacred rivers exist in the ears of a Vipra as stated by Manu, while Surya, Varuna, Chandra, Agni, Vayu Devatas too are stationed in the right ear as believed by Paraashara). Paraashara further states: Satyaamaachamanam -
In the event of inability or when worthy water is unavailable, then as an alternative one’s own the right ear be touched.

Snaana Vidhi: Vyasa opines: Praatah kaaletu sampraapte kriivaa chaavashyakam buddhah, Snaayaamnadeeshu shuddhaasu shoucham kriivaa yadhaa vidhii/ (A virtuous person would perform his morning routine and then take bath in rivers or running waters) Balam rupam yashodharmam jnaanamaayussakham dhritim, Arogyam paramaapnoiti sanyak snaanena maanaavah/ (Satyavrata assures that a full bath provides a person good strength, body form, reputation, virtue, knowledge, longevity, happiness, courage and health) Atri explains further: Asnaatasheemalam bhuktehyajaapah puyashonitam, Ahutaashee krimim bhuktehyadaataaa vishamashnute/ Snaana mulaah kriivaa shrutismrityuditaa nrinaam, Asnaatstu pumaanaarhah japahomaadi karmasu/ Praatar madhyaalohnoh snaanam vaanaprastha griihasthayoh, Yatestrishavanam snaanam sakruucha brahma chaarinaam/ Sarvepi sakrit kuryuh Ashaktaochodakam vinaa, Saamardhyechaambu sadbhaave yathaa shastram hitat bhavet, Snaanam cha sarva varnaanaam karyam shochaparassaram/ (A person who is not bathed but eats food, that food is as bad as excretion, just as a person does not meditate and eats food that food is as horrible as consuming blood; food without performing Agni Homa is stated to eating worms and food without daana is to be considered as poisonous! Both Grihastaas and Vaanaprasthaas ought to take bath twice in the morning and evening. Sanyasis thrice and Brahmacharís on ‘sakrit’ basis or as when water is unavilable or not possible physically beyond the minimum a day. In fact, this clause of Sakrit is available to all, but subject to one’s own ability and shortage of water the escape clause is not applicable. In any case, the first bath in the morning is compulsory! Jala madhyesthito viprah shuddha bhaavo harim smaret, Snaatva achaanto vaari magnah trih pathedadhamarshanam/ (Shaunaka Muni states that a vipra should go deep enough into water, pray to Shri Hari and after snaana, aachamana and drowning thrice perform ‘Agahamarshana’ thrice.) Daksha explains details: Dhaayennaaraayana Devam snaanaadishu cha karmasu, Brahmalokamavaapnoti na chaaiha jaayate punah/ Sankalpah Suktapathanam maarjanam chaaghamarshanan, Devataa tarpanamcheti snaanam panchangamuchyate/ Apravaahodaka snaanam viprapaadaavanejanam,Gayaatri japamarghyam cha Aadityabhimukha scharet/ Srotasokhimukhah snaayaan maarjane chaaghamarshane, Anyatraarka mukhe raatrou praagudanmukha yevavaa, Sandyhaaa muhkastu sandhyaayaamk daivedaivonmukhastathaa/ Shikhaam badhvachamyta tatam prakshalya xdarbhaanmidaayaa darbha paanti, Jamal natwaa prayataanaajali praagmukho avagaahya kakshaadi, Nirmujja snaatvadavraachchamya darbha paanina raapohishthaadayi/ Abdevataiah maarjanam kriitwaaghamarshanan kurvaai punah snaatwaas dwirachaachyamya tarpanam kuryaat/ (While taking bath Narayana Smarana and dhyaan puts one on the path of Brahma Loka. Sankalpa, Purusha Sukta Pathana, Marjana, Aghamarshana, Devata tarpana are stated to be the ‘Panchaangas’! Jalapravaha snaana, vipra paada prakshalana, Gayatri Japa must be performed facing Surya Deva. Jalapravaha marjana and aghamarshana snaana must be facing the flow of water, while the other acts like snaana and worships need to face Surya only. While in the water flow, the tuft be twisted, achamana be performed, carry darbhas and on greeting with folded hands, get into the waterflow facing east, clean the armpits and body parts, perform Achamana twice, recite the mantra: ‘apohishthaa mayobhavah’ etc. to please ‘Jala Devatas’ while doing ‘maarjana’, ‘Ahamarshanas’, repeat snaanas and tarpanas) Skanda Purana prescribes: Udayhaatpraak chatasrastu naadikaa arunodayah, tatra snaanam prashamsanti sahi punya tamah smritih/ Nityam naamittim kaamyam trividham snaanamuchyate, Tarpanam tu bhavettasyaam gatvena prakeertitam/ (Four ghadis before Sunrise, bathing is stated to be the best and of assured Punya.
The three kinds of snaanas are known as Nitya Snaana, Naimittika snaana, Kaamy Snaana and tarpanas ought to precede the snaanas.) Vishnu Purana prescribes that the Tarpanas directed to Deva, Rishi, Pitru Devas ought to be performed with wet clothes after the snaanas only. Bharadvaaja Maharshi provides many other details about ‘Snaanaas’: Tarpanam Devataadibhyah svasva tirthena tarpayet, Goshringa maatramudhrutyat tarpane jalamstrijet/ Yaina tirthena grijneeyaattenata dadyaajjalanaanjaaim, Anya teerthana grijniyaat tattedyo rudhuram bhavet/ Purvaashaabhimukho Devaanuttarabhi mukhastrusheen, Dakshinaayastu pitrunaam jalamadyetu tarpayet/ Devarshi tarpanam kritya Yakshaaanam tarpayettate, Yannayaa dushtitam toym shareera mala sanchayaat, Taddosha parihaaaradham Yakshaaanam tarpayaaamyamah/ (Deva tarpana is to be performed by the same water as fetched by the Karta and not with any other water resource as tarpana done with any other water would be like that of blood! Tarpana to Devas is to be directed to eastern side, to Rishis directed to north, and Pitru Devatas to the Southern side and all these are to be performed within the water flows only. After performing Deva-Rishi tarpana in the water, yaksya tarpana is to be done on the banks stating that since the body was unclean due to the water flow, the yaksya tarpana is being performed on the banks. Even as the clothes are wet on the banks, the Karta should try to drip out the water of his clothes and perform Pitru Tarpan with the mantra: yekechaasmattkule jaataa/ or may all the souls of the deceased in my Vamsha be blessed.

Snaana bhedas: Snaanatu dvividham proktam gounamukhya prabhedatah/ Shankha Maharshi made broad classification of Snaanas viz. Gauna and Mukhya. Daksha Prajapati defined eight kinds of Snaanas: Agneyam Vaarunam Braahmyam Vaayavyam divyamevacha, Maanasam Paarthivam chiravatshamam navamam snaanamuttamam/ Bharadvaaja suggested: Praangmukhascharanouhastou prakshaalyaacha praangmukhascharanaam sanaam samaacharet/ Aadaaya bhasitam svetam Agnihotra samudbhavam, Ishaanenu mantrena svanamudhane vinikshipet/ Tatah aadaaya tadbhasma mukhe tatpurushenat, Aghoraakhyena hridaye guhye vaamaahvayenacha/ Sadyojaataabhidhaanena bhasma paadaladvaye kshipet, Sarvangam pranavenaiva mantrenoddhalayettatah, Yetadaagneyakam snaanam uditam paramarshibhiih/ (There are eight kinds of Snaanas viz. Agneya, Vaaruna, Braahma, Vaayavya, Divya, Maanas, Paarthiva and Kaapila; the ninth being Saarasvata. One should face east, washa hands and feet, after Achamana, Praanaayaama and Sankalpa, perform ‘Bhasma Snaana’ or the Sacred Ash Bath by picking up adequate Bhasma from Agnihotra and by reciting Ishana mantra place it on one’s head. Then apply the bhasma on face reciting Tatpurusha mantra, on the heart area with Aghora mantra, at the ghuya pradesha with Vaama Deva mantra and on both the feet with Sadyojaata mantra. By reciting the Pranava mantra apply all over the body and this is called Agneyaka snaana by Saints.) Vyasa defines Vaaruna snaana for executing Pitru tarpana by dipping into the water flow reciting Abdevata mantras: Snaanan abdevatai mantraih jalemajjana gaahanaih, Tarpanan Pitrudevataanaam snaanam Vaarunamuchyate/Katyayana defines Brahma Snaana: Aposhisthaadibhirdhaayam mantra snaanam hitatatsmatam, Kusahaagrarmarjanan kuryadevaa tirthenavaadijaih(Brahmya snaana is to perform ‘maarjana’ with ‘kushaagraas’ by reciting ‘aposhithhaad’ mantras and diping into water flow) Brihaspatis describes the rest of the Snaana vidhis: Vaayavya gorajah proktam astam gacchati gopatou, Vidvat sarasvati praaptam snaanam Saarasvatam smritam/ Uttaraayana madhyetu yadaa varshati Vaasavaah, Aatapena saha snaanam Divyam snaanam tadochyaate/ Chaturbujham Maha Devam shankha chakra gadaadharam, Manasadhyaaiyate Vishnum Maanasam snaanamuchyate/ Shuchideshaanmrudam gruhya kuryaat gatropalepanam,mantriay maadhva samyuktaa Bhoomam snaanam tadochyaate/ (As Sunset approaches, snaana by smearing godhuli on the body is called Vayavya Snaana. After attending to
‘vidvadgoshthi’ of learned persons of Sarasvati Swarupa is called Sarasvati Snaana. Sometime during mid ‘Uttarayana’ when there occurs rain with sunshine and bathing at that time is named Divya Snaana. Snaana while praying in one’s mind about Maha Vishnu with four hands sporting shankha-chakra-gada-sarangas is illustrated as Maanasa Snaana. Smearing earth from a clean and sacred surrounding on one’s body parts and performing bath is known as Bhouma Snaana) (Manu says that Snaanas be taken among the water bodies like Jeeva Nadis or ever flowing rivers, divine water bodies like Pushkar and Manasarovara, and wells and deep water pits) Puraanaanaam Narendraanaam rishinaamchaa mahatmanaam, Snaanam kapatataakeshu devataaanaam samaacharet/Bhumishthamudhrutaatpunyam tatah prasravanodakam, Tatopi Saarasam punyam Gaangam punyantu sarvataah/ (Markandeya describes that in the past there were some water bodies dug up in which Kings, Rishis ans Mahatmas bathed and performing snaana at such places are worthy indeed. Water dug up from the depths of earth is sacred and so are the water falls and of flows; reputed Sarovaras and Rivers like Ganga are highly sacred) Yoga Yagnyavalkya prescribes that whenever one has to take bath elsewhere, then snaana be done by discarding palmful of water seven times first and then proceed. Also, wherever there is a running River of Sacredness nearby, one should prefer bathing in it rather than in any stored water!

Samudra Snaana: The general saying is: Ashvattham manda vaaretu Saagaram parvani sprushet, Ashvattha Saagaraao seyyou kadaachana/(Ashvattha tree is worthy of touch on Saturdays and so is Samudra on Pournamis; indeed both these are worthy of worship and not to be touched indiscriminately) Bharadwaaja Muni instructs: Krishnaangaara chaturdashayodbhou snaanam samacharet, Tasya janma saahasreshyu sarvam paapam pranashyati/ Seturnaapekshate kaalam nityam snaanam prashayate, Nishedhah kaalabhedaaya setoranyatra karhichit/ (Samudra Snaanas on Tuesdays of Krishna Paksha and Chaturdashis would destroy sins of thousands of previous births. However Setu snaanas could be done without any restrictions of days or times.) Vyasa Maharshi describes: Kurukshetram Gayaam Gangaam Prabhaa sam Naimisham tathaa, Tirthenyetaani sarvaani snaanakaale smaredbudhah / Aapayeva putaaah taasaam vahnirvishodhakah, Tasmaatsarveshu kaaleshu ushaanabhah paavanam smritam/ (All the persons of virtue should bathe at Kurukshetra, Gaya, Gangaa, Prabhasa, Naimisha and while so bathing announce the Sacred names of the Places concerned. While water purifies and is clean, Agni purifies far more and hence hot water baths are stated to be more preferable at all the places and times)

Naimittika Snaanas: Tatopsumagnaa triraghamarshanam tadvisnoh paramam padam, Iti vaa Savitreem Vaayumjate mana ityanuvakam/ Vaa Purusha suktam vaa japiitvaa Snaatvaa vaa japiitvaa snaatvaardra vaasaa devarshi, Pitru tarpanam ambhasthaha eva kuryaat/ (Vishnu Maharshi instructs that one should perform Naimittika Snaanas by dipping fully into a water body, perform Aghamarshana thrice reciting ‘Tadvishnoh paramam padam’ or ‘Saavitreem yunjata manah’ or ‘Purusha Sukta’ Japa, and then observe Pitru Tarpana Vidhi while being in water itself!) Divaa keertimudayaaam cha sutikaam patitam tathaa,, Shavam tatrirsitnam chaiva sprushtyaa snaanena shudhyati/ (Manu prescribes that sparsha or touch of a barber, a woman in the stage of menstruation, a woman in the immediate post delivery period, a fallen woman, or a corpse or those who would interact with a corpse would require purification by discarding the clothing and taking bath for purification) Dussvapnam yadi pashyettu vaante cha kshura karmani, maithune preta dhume cha snaanameva vidheeyate/ (Bad dreams, vomiting, hair cuts, union with women, smoke of dead bodies would most certainly demand naimittika snaanas, says Parashara)

However, Smaarta view is some what relaxed: Sankate vishame chaiva durge chaiva visheshatah, Hatta
At the times facing difficult and fearful situations, visiting places of high altitudes, market places etc. snaanas are not compulsory but optional. Snaanas are also not called for by touching grass heaps, wood, walls, cows and children.) But Apastamba Sutras require that formal bathing is compulsory when dog bites, wash the place affected, draw fire nearby the affected area, wash the feet and perform sachela snaana and ‘Aachamana’. However the Sutras exempt snaana in a few other contexts: Na snaayaadutsaveteete Mangalyam vinivartyacha, Anuvrajya suhrd bandhun archayitveshta devataah, Na snaanamaacharet bhuktvaa naa turonamaha nishi/(No bathing is called for after attending Celebrations, Shubha Karyas, seeing off friends and relatives, after worship to Devatas, while in illness, after taking meals and at mid-night times!) Manu underlines the need for snaanas even at the late nights in specified contexts: Raahu darshana Sankraanti vivaahaatyaya vriddhi - shu, Snaana daanaadikam kuryaansishi Kamya Vrateshu cha/ (Ratri snaanas are specially called for in the context of Grahanas or Eclipses, Vivaha dosha graha yoga kaala, and in connection with ‘Kamya Vratas’ and the adjunct activities of ‘grahanas’ viz. Snaana Daanas.) More is stated about Grahanas by Maha Bharata, Vyasa Muni and Vasishtha respectively:Gangaa snaanam prakurveeta grahane Chandra Suryayayoh, Mahaa nadishu chaayaasau snaanam kuryaat yadhyadhyaha duhaa vidhii/Sarvam gangaa saam toyam sarve brahma samoddvijaaah, Sarvam Bhumi samam daanam grahane chandra Suryahoi/ Gavam koti pradaanenasamayak dattena tathphalam, Gangasnaane tathphalam syaadraahugraste Nisha kare/ Chandra Surya grahechaiva yovagaaheta jaahnnavim, Sasnaatah sarva tirtheshu kimardhamatate Maheem/ (At the Solar and Lunar eclipses, one must perform formal baths in Ganges or other Sacred Rivers, states Maha Bharata, Vyasa states that in connection with the eclipses, all the waters assume the significance of Gangaa in all the rivers, while all the dvijas turn out to be equivalent to Brahma and any charity would be as good as Bhudaana!Vridhha Vasishtha assures that Ganga Snaana at the time of Chandra Grahana bestows the fruits of koti godaana! He further exhales that any person performing Ganga Snaana during the Chandra-Surya Grahanas would reap the benefit of Sarva Tirtha Snaanas.) Shaataatapa Maharshi assures: Snaanam daanam tathaah shraaddham anantam Rahudarshaney! (At the time of Rahu darshan, all virtuous deeds like snaana-daana-shraaddhas would attract endless fruits!)

**Samkramana:** Samkraanyaam yaani dattaani havya kavyaani Maanavaaih, Taani tasya dadaatkaryah sapta jhanmasu nischitam/ (Whatever beneficial fruits of havya-kavya-daanas at the time of Samkramana are stated to be directly received by Surya Deva and are repaid back for seven births ahead!) Samkraanti samayah sukshmah durjeyah pishitekshanaah, Tadyogaadapayadhah cha urham trimshannaadayyah pavitritaah/ Ayanedve vishavedve chatasrasshada sheetayah, Chatusro Vishnupadyas -cha samkraantyo dwaadasha smritaah/(Devatala Maharshi explains that the precise time of Samkranti is difficult to ascertain and that is why a margin of thirty n adis to and fro is reckoned as sacred. Of the two Ayanas, there are two Vishus, Shadsheetis two, Vishnupadis four and Samkrantis twelve). Ayane vimshatih purvaa Makare vvimshati paraah, Vartamanee tulaamsehe naadayastoobhayato dasha/ Ayane koti punyam cha sahasram Vishave phalam, Shadashetyaam sahasrantu phalam Vishnupadeepicha/ (Brihaspati explains that in the dakshinayana time, the samkramana is to be reckoned as twenty ghadis before and twenty ghadis ahead in respect of Uttarayana kaala; in the case of the latter after Samkramana, the Punya Kaala is twenty ghadis and during Tula Mesha Samkramana the punya kaala is of ten ghadis. Whatever deeds of virtue are performed during the Ayana are rewarded by crore times, thousand times during vishu time as also the ‘shadasheeti’ and vishnupada timings too).
Rajasvalaa Snaana: Katyaayana Maharshi defines the shuddhi for menstruation: *Rajasvalaa chaturdhehni snaataayaam punareva rajasvala, Ashtaadasha dinaadarvaag shuchitvam navidyate, Unavinshati dinaadarvaagekaaham- ashuchirbhavet/(Once the bath is performed as above, till the eighteenth day there is no ‘Ashuchi’which commences there after.)

Kaamya Snaanas: Deva yatraa Vivaaheshu yogineshu praajrutaay cha, Utsaveshu cha sarveshu sprushthaapadrshirtha dusshyati/(The general ruling is the criterion of touch or no touch restriction is not applicable to Deva Yatra,Weddings, Yagnaa Sacrifices and Celebrations) Pulastya Rishi defines Kaamya Snaanas as follows: *Pushyecha Janma nakshatre vyateepaatecha Vaidhrutai, Amaayancha nadi snaanaam punatyaah saptamah kulah/ Rayyangaararshanaervaa snaanam kuvantitiyaa naraah, Vyaadhhibhista napeedyante mrigaih kesarinoyatha ah/Chaitra krishna chatur dashyaam yah snaaanachiva sannidhou, Na pretvamavaapnoti Gangaayaam cha visheshatah/(Pulastya Muni states: Baths in Sacred Rivers on Janma Nakshatras, in Pushya month, vaidhruti vyatipaata graha yogaas, and Amavasyas would provide salvation for seven past generations. Persons performing snaanas on Sundays, Tuesdays, Saturdays would be free from physical diseases as intense as hurt by lions and deers. One should consciously take sacred baths in the premises of Lord Shiva on Chaitra Krishna Chaturdashi, possibly in the Ganges to avoid ‘pretatva’ for ever.)

Malaapakarshana Snaanas: Bharadwaaja Maharshi details these snanas as follows: *Abhyanga snaapaneye Yogaa vaaraaye tithibhissahaa, Kathyate tethunaa spashtam pushtaye balavriddhayeh/ Indorbudhasya sourescha vaarebhyangam prashastyaa kaantim, Shriyam tathaay dadyuh bhogaan vaaraadhipaah kramaat/ Dwiteeyeaadhyaaahchatsrascha prashastaaah Saptanah tathaa, Navami Dashami chaiva Trayodashiyapi cha smritaah/ Bhaanu bhoomaamaaraacharya Shukravaareeshu sankramake, Vyatipaatecha Janmakshenaahchyangam snaanaamaacharet/ Ekadashyaam chaardushaayam Ashtamyaam pratipadyapi, Shashyaaam Paramvaa chaachaahyaah snaanamaaiva samaacharet/Uttaraa phalguni jyeshthaa Shavanaardraasu raatrihum, Abhyanga snaapaname dheemaan sukhardhi varjayettathaa/ Shishurogaaartaa vriddhaanaam yathaakaalam shareerinaam, Abhyangoshnodaka snaanaam naiva dshaavaaham smритam/
(Abhyangana Snaanas prescribed for health and strength are prescribed as follows: Monday, Wednesday and Sunday are excellent for these as they grant brightness, opulence and enjoyment respectively. Tithewise, Dvitteya - Tritteeya - Chaturthi - Panchami, Saptami, Navami are Trayodashi auspicious. But, Sunday - Tuesday - Thursday - Friday, Vachanama timings are avoidable. Also, Ekadashi, Chaturdashi, Ashtami, Prathama, Shashti and Pournamai are unworthy. Uttara Phalguni, Jyeshtha, Shravana, Ardra nakshatras are to be avoided. Children, persons suffering from diseases and old aged are exempt from the above restrictions and might bathe with hot water)

Naraka Chaturdashi Snaana: Aashvayu krishna pakshetu chaturdashyaaminodaye, Tailaabhyangam cha kartavyamsnaanam ushnena vaarinaa/ (One must perform ‘tailaabhyanga’ or oilbath with hot water in the early morning hours of Ashviyuja Krishna Chaturdashi.) Chaturdashi yaashvayuja sya krishnaa svaatyarkayuktaa cha bhavetprabhave snaanam samabhayajya narastu kaaryam, Sugandhitailena vibhuti kaamaaah taile Lakshmirjale Gandaa Deeppavai dineveset Alakshmi parihaarvaaratham abhyanga snaana maacharet tata Aabharanam vastram dhaarayet sarva sampadah labhet/ (Naraka Chaturdashi coincides with the Swati Nakshatra yuksa Ashviyuja Krishna Chaturdashi in the morning. Those who are fond of gaining opulence have to execute formal perfumed oil bath at that auspicious time as the belief is that Lakshmi resides in oil and Ganga turns water all around. The oil bath is a must to obliter ate poverty and unhappiness. There after, one wears new clothing and jewellery to signify the arrival of Devi Lakshmi! It was that very Krishna Chaturdashi when Lord Vishnu in the incarnation of Krishna freed humanity from the evils of Naraakasaara and hence all those who are afraid of Naraaka and hell ought to perform ‘Abhyanjana Snaana’ and secure fullfillment of one’s life!) Yama Dharma Raja certifies: Ghritam cha saarshapam tailam yattailam pushpavaasitam, Na doshah pakva taileshu snaanaabhyangeshu nityatah/ (Ghee, Sarshapa oil, flower oils are always worthy of boiling before use for ‘abhyangana’)

Nadee Snaanaas: Brahmanda Purana signifies the following most famed Sacred Rivers: Godaavari Bheema Rathee Tungabhadraa cha Venika, Taapipayoshnikaa Vindhya Dakshinetu prakeertitaah/ Bhvaerathii Narmadaa cha Yamunaa cha Sarasvati, Vishokaa cha Vitastaa cha Vindhysottara sanjnataa, Dwaadashaataa Mahaa Nadyo Devarshi kshetra sambhavaa/ (The following Sacred Rivers down the Vindhyas are Godavari, Bheema Rathi, Tungabhadra, Krishnaveni, Tapati and Payoshnika; in the northern Bharat are the noted Bhagiradhi, Narmada, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Vishoka and Vitasta are among the Maha Nadis in Uttara Bharat.) Gangaa cha Yamuna Godaavareesya- thungabhadraa, Kaveri cha Maha Punya Maha Nadyaah prakeertitaah/Aadou karkatake sarvaa Maha Nadyoh rajasva - laah, Tridinantu chaturdhehni shuddhaasurjaahnavi yadhaa/ Chatram cha harat paadam Ardham harati paadukou, Yaaam heretripaadam tu sarvam harati dolikaa/ Yescharaallobha mohaadvaa gacchedyaana abhistuyah, Nishphalam tasya teertham tasmaadyaanaadi varjayet/ (The Maha Nadis are stated to be Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Tungabhadra, and Kaveri and during the first three days of Karkataka Rashi, these rivers are stated to be affected by menses and on the fourth day they attain Shuddhi or Purity. While one proceeds on Tirtha Yatras, the Yatris carrying umbrellas get discounted of thier ‘Punya’by a quarter, carrying fororwear lose half of it, going by a ‘Vahana’ lose two thirds and nil going by the comfort of a ‘Palki’ carried by human beings! Thus the genuine yatris should note these facts!

SANDHYA VANDANA

Prerequisites for Sandhya Vandana: Vastra Dhaarana: After taking the bath as prescribed, one should wear
a white ‘dhoti’ and ‘uttareeya’, tighten the head hair, clean the feet with water and leave the ‘snaana vastras’ in the water flow. Bhrigu Maharshi disallows wearing deep red and black clothing, wet clothes and without borders. Kati sutram vinaa shroutam Smaartam Karma karoti yah, Sarvam tannishphalam vidyaatsopi nagna iti smritah/Sapta vaataahatam vastram shushkavat pratipaaditam, Shuchivohavyaa maruta ityuktvaa shuddamambaram/Samprokshya Devasyatveti griheetvaa chaavadhutayet, Taraniru dutyamiti vaava vahanteeti chaadayet/(No Punya Karma of ‘Shrouta- Smaarta’ nature be even performed without ‘Kati Sutra’ as all such deeds are invalid; so is a person desirous of performing such deeds without ‘kaccha’ or ‘uttareeya’ is as bad as nude and thus disqualified. Before wearing the dhoti and uttareeya, one should recite the mantra viz. ‘Shucheevohavyaa maruta’, then perform ‘samprokshana’ or sprinkle water, then show the vastras to Surya Deva saying ‘Avadhutam raksha’ and again state ‘aava hanti’ and then cover the body) Snaanam daanam japam svaadhyaa -yamapi tarpanam, naika astrodvijah kuryaat shraadhabhojana satkriyaa/(No dwija must ever perform snaana,daana, japa, homa, svadhyaya, tarpana, bhajanad acts without uttareeya wearing a single cloth as this is typical blemish.

Pundra dharana: Padma Purana states: Griheyasya sadaa tisthet gopichandanamrittikaa, Dvarakaa vihitaa tatra Krishnena sahitaa Kalou Gopichandana lipyaangoyam yampashyati chakshusha, tamtam putam vijaaneeyaatmaatra karyaa vicharana/(Which ever home there is ‘gopichandana dharana’ in Kaliyuga is blessed as Dvaraara along with Krishna. There is no doubt that whosoever is smeared with gopichandana is seen into his eyes is called a beloved friend) Adhrvana Veda affirms that who so ever wears on his forehead the imprint of Lord Krishna’s Sacred Feet as signified with an ‘Urthva Pundra’ is most certainly a loving friend and an undoubted devotee worthy of ready veneration. The devotee of the Lord after formal bathing would address Gopichandana greeting it as having been born of Vishnu’s own body and after ‘abhimantrana’ stating Shankha chakra gadaa paani Dvaraka nilayaachyta Govinda Pundarikaaksha rakshamaam sharanaa gatam/ and then apply on the forehead. A grihasta should apply with the ring finger on twelve spots reciting Vishnu Gayatri and/or Keshavaadi naamas. A Brahmachari or a Vanaprastha should apply on the fore head, throat, heart and armpits reciting Vishnu Gayatri or the Five names of Keshavaadi namas. A sanyasi would apply the Urthva Pundra with his pointing finger on his head, forehead and heart. Vishnu Smriti states that without the Urthva Pundra no acts of virtue like Yaaga, japa, daana, japa, homa, svadhyaya and pitru tarpana would be effective.

Bhasma Tripundra dharana: Kaalaagni Rudropanishadi Agneyam bhasma Sadyojaatamiti pancha brahma mantriha pratigruthya Aghniritanena abhimantraya/[Kalaagni Rudropanishad gives the procedure of ‘Agni bhasma abhimantrana’ of taking the bhasma into hand reciting the mantras: Sadyojaatam prapadyaami Sadyo jaataayavai namo namah, Bhave bhavenaati bhave bhavaavamaam namah/ and performing Aghniriti abhimantrana; then take the bhasma and water drops and apply on one’s head, forehead, chest and hands reciting: Maaastoke iti samaadhrutya jalena samruuya Shiro lalaaata vakshaskandheshtuayasyahiva Tritambakaistirvikai trishro rekhaa prakrveeta vratametacchhabhavam sarvavedeshu vedavaatibhiruktam bhavati/ This procedure of Tripundra Bhasma Dharana in three lines across the forehead that there would no rebirth. Those who possess ‘bhasma tripundra’- be he a brahmachari, a grihastha, vaanaprastha or yati, would absolve all kinds of sins, and is taken as having worshipped all the Devas and Tirthas. A Vaidika Brahmana needs to apply bhasma tripundra across the forehead, two shoulders, navel, head, heart and both the sides. Kaatyayana assures that shraaddhas, yagnas, japa, homa, Vaishva -deva, Suraarchana and daanash become doubly fruitful with ‘bhasma tripundra’ and ineffective otherwise.
Procedure of Sadhya Vandana: Commencing from the brightness of the Stars on the Sky till the Sun Rise is stated as Praatah Sandhya; it is said that the last fall of night during two ‘naadis’ heralds the Praatah Sandhya when the first ray of Sun becomes visible. Yoga Yagnavalkya states: Sandhou sandhyaam upaastir garhita samritavrataah, Vidhuta paapamaste yaati Brahma lokam sanatanam// Yadadhaakurute paapam karmano manasaas giraa, Aaseenah paschichamaa sandhyam pranaaayamaanistaan hititaat// Yadraatyaan kurute paapam karmano manasaas giraa, Purvaa sandhyam - mupaaseenah pranaaayamaamaairvyapohati/Aparetu arghya daanam Sandhyaadhyaanam Gayatri japah upasthaamchaa pradhaaanamitii vaatiti// Dvighatitudayaadarvaak praharaaardham tethopari, Sandhyaad kaalasya vigjneyo hyanyatha langhanam smritam/Tadtraastha kshobha jalaabhaavaa shaktyaadypatsu Anukalpaabhyaajaparam// (As one always performs Sandhya Vandana regularly and as a devotion, he would be eligible for achieving Brahma Loka. Whatever blemishes that one accrues during the day time by way of deed, thought, or conversation are destroyed by the ‘Praanaayama’ performed during the evening Sandhya Worship. Similarly whatever sins are committed during the nights are washed out by the Pratassandhyas. Arghya pradana, Sandhya Vandana, Gayatri Japa and worship on daily basis thrice are defined as prime qualifiers of the day. Yama further prescribes that two ghadis before sun rise and mid day time for the worship should be never crossed. Indeed, the ever auspicious practice of Veda Vidhana, is compulsory even overcoming difficulties such as those faced in the Society, lack of water supply and lack of physical ability) Atri Maharshi states that when there are no hindrances, and when person is in good health, ignoring the regulation on dvijas and not observing the duties would surely land the person in great troubles. Atri also cautioned that while performing ‘Sandhya-o-paasana’, the Sacred deed should not be executed with a forceful flow of water as Devas/Pitru Devas would not appreciate the same: Dhaaraachyuteena toyena Sandhyaopaastirgarhitaat, Na prashamsanti Pitaro na prayogini kriyaa krutvaa pradaapayet// Praveete baddha shriyasthitha, Praangmukhasthaam Viprah sandhyaopasanamaachharett// Karyaa atmaa kriyaa Gayatra cha abhimantir, Adityaaabhiklasthithaan trmurtvamathachokshipet/Dvouhastou yugmatah krutvaa purayodekamanjalim, Goshringa maatra mudhruta jala madhya jalaam kshipet// Jaleshvarghyam pradaatvayam jalaabhave shuchishalam, Samprokshhya harinaa samyak tatogyaatii praadupayet// Praatarmadhyayaahnoysthitam saayamaaaseena evaach// (Sandhyaopasanama be formally performed with yajnopaveeta in position, tuft duly tied up, and with steady mind and thought. One should be seated facing Surya Deva in the East and with ‘Achamana’ done thrice. Again, holding water in both the palmsful facing Surya, sprinkle it up and down thrice over, purify one’s body parts and
then initiate sandhyopasana’. Then, palmfuls of water be raised a little high to release the water first in the flow and subsequently give ‘arghya pradana’ to Surya in the standing position. Both in the morning, midday and the evening the same procedure be followed.) Shankha Muni states: Griheteveka guneem proktam Nadyaadou dvigunam smritam, Gavaam goshthe dashagunam Agnyaagare shataadhikam, Siddha khestreshu Tirtheshu Devataayaascha sannidhou, Sahasram shata koteenaam anantam Vishnu sannidhou/ (‘Sandhyaavandanaadi karyaas’ fetch twice over the fruits as performed in rivers than in one’s house; ten times more significant executing in cow sheds; hundred times more in Yagnya shaalas, thousand times better at Siddha Khetras or Tirthas in the presence of Devaalayas but indeed one would secure Ananta Punya in the presence of Vishnu himself!) Brihaspati prescribes the procedure: Badhvaasananam niyamaasoon smritaachaaryaadikam tathaa, Sannimeeatadrik mouni praanaayaamam samabhyaset/ (The Karta should be seated controlling breathing, memorising Arsha mantras with closed eyes in silence.) Saptavyahriti samyuktam Gayatreem shirasaa saha namaskrutya, Dasha vaaram japiyavam Gayarteem tulyaasritatvaan samabhyaset/ (Imagining the Sacred Face of Gayatri Devi with ‘sapta vyahritis’ and sincerely greeting her with head down, recite Gayatri Mantra ten times within the Self) Now Yama Dharma Raja describes as follows: Gayatreem Vedaamscha tulayaatolayat prabhuh, Ekatah Chaturu Vedaan saamaagamscha sapadakramaan, Ekaantaamaa Gayatreem tulyaasritatvaan samabhyaset/ (Paramatma weighed Deva Gayatri on one side and the Vedas on another; as on one side the Four Vedas with ‘Pada kakrams’ and ‘Angas’ and Gaythri alone on the other side of the Balance, the latter should be of the same result). Manu states: Purvam Sandhyaam japam tishthet saavitreem arka darshanaat, Paschimaam tu samaaseenah namyagaarakshavibhaavanat/ (Before the Sunrise, worship is performed to Savitri while standing and at the Sunset in the west, the worship be as seated) Grihastho brahmachaareecha shatamashtottaram japet, Vaanaprastho Yatischaiva japedashta sahasrakam/ Utaam maanasam japam Upaamshu madhyamam smritam, Vaanaprastho Yatischaiva japedashta sahasrakam/ (Samvarta suggested that Gayatri Mantra be rendered hundred times by Grihastis and Brahmacharis, while Vaanaprasthas and Yatis should do the japa thousand times. Sarva mantra japas be perfomed best by Manasika Vidhana, Upaamshu or without ‘shabdochaarana’ or vocal pronunciation is of medium type and the least one is by vocalic way.) Ratnaavali states: Parvabhistu japeddevam anyatraa niyamaah smritisah, Gayatrya vedamulatvaat Vedahparvasu geeyate/ (Gayatri Japa is stated as extremely important, whether on other days is done or not, since Gayatri is the root of Vedas and hence it is so essential.) Bharadvaaja Maharshi described the details of various Devatas to be worshipped: Upasthaaya namaskrutyaat chatussandhyaad Devataah, Sandhyaar purastaat Savitri Gayatri cha Sarasvatii, etah sandhyaadayah proktah chatusro devataah kramaat/ Praachi cha Dakshinaachaiva Praticeee - chottarodhvakaah, Adharaacchantarikshamcha Bhumsichaashtidotaa dishah/ Etaah pradakshinenaiva pranametsvamantratah, Yama Vishnu Virupaaksha savitrunaamupasthitam, Kuryaatalligakairmantraah dviyo yaamyaaai dingmukhah/ (One should worship the Sandhya Devatas viz. Sandhya, Savitri, Gayatri and Sarasvati. The dvija should greet and self-circumambulate Ashta Dikpalakas reciting appropriate mantras commencing from Dakshina, further followed by Yama Deva, Vishnu, Virupaaksha and Savitru Devatas). Japa vidhana: Pavitrairmaarjanam kurvan Rudraaadvashanipam japam, muchyate sarva paapebhyo mahatah paataadruote/ (While performing ‘maarjana’ with darbhas, ‘Rudraadashanini Japa’ be executed so that the person concerned would be freed from heaps of sins, assures Bodhaayana Rishi) Ekadasha gunaanvaapi Rudraaadvahartya dharmavit, Mahaap paapairapi sprushto muchate naatram samshayah/ (Atri Maharshi emphasises that if a person of virtue were to recite Ekaadasha Rudra eleven times should for sure attain Mukti.) Vishnu Maharshi states : Snataah pavitraani yaha shakti japedvishatah, Savitreem
Purusha Suktam chanaitaabhyaam sadrushamastii/ (There are no equivalent mantras worthy of reciting Purusha Sukta after ‘shuchi snaana’ some two hundred times addressed to Savitri) Similar is on the lines of what Samvarta states: Shanmaasam pancha maasam vaa nityato nityaatashanah, Japtvaatu pourusham Suktam muchyate sarva paatakahii/ (Those who recite Purusha Sukta some five or six months regularly while observing a regulated food intake regime would secure redemption surely) Harernaama padam japyam dhyeyam geeyam nirantaram, Keertanaayamcha satatam nirvrittim bahudechchataa/(Jaabaali assures that Hari naama dhyaaana-japa-stuti-gaanaadis would take fast steps ahead of salvation) Hitvaa sakala paapaani labhdhvaasukritii sanchayam, Suputo jaayate dheeman Murajinnaama keertanaat/ Krishna Krishneti Raameti sajapan Haritapararah, Raajasuya sahasraanaam phalamaapnoti Maanavah/ Nitya karmaaviruddhesu kaaleshu japa ishyate/ Shri shabdapurvam jayashabda madhyam jayadvayaaduttaratah, adaivatisaptakrutvo Ragunadha naamajaptam, vihanyaadvjakoti hatyaam/ (Vasishtha Muni emphasises that Murahari Naama Samkeertana is the ideal solution to destroy the heaps of sins to get converted to funds of Punya and lead to an exemplary life ahead. Non-stop ‘japa’ of ‘Krishna Krishna Rama Hari’ bestows the fruits of thousand Rajaasuya Yagnas, without disturbing the daily schedule of Dharma. Ragunadha nama smarana with Shri shabda initially followed by ‘Jayarama Jayajayan Rama’ all the times would demolish ‘Koti Brahmahayas’) Koti shomanu jaanaamayi bheetidham samupasthitam, Rama Rameti sankeeritya sannasaashayati maanavah/ (Bhrigu Maharshi assures that fears and mental instabilities in crores get cleared with intense ‘Rama Sankeerana’ continuously). Narada Brahmarshi states that the intensity of Kali Yuga is gradually diminished with Nitya Keertana: Shiva Shankara Rudresha Neelakantha Trilochana, Iteerayantiye nityam na Kalirbhadhyate chataaan Mahadeva Virupaksha Gangaadhara Mridaavyaya, Iteeranti ye nityam te kritaadhona shamshayah/ (Nitya keertana of ‘Shiva Shankara Rudresha Neelakantha Trilochana’ or ‘Mahadeva Virupaaksha Gangaadhara Mridaavyaya’ assures the severity of Kali Yuga, reduces its impact and bestows fulfillment of one’s life!)

Significance of Darbhas: Kusha moole sthito Brahma kushamadhyetu Keshavah, Kushaagre Shankara vidyaat Sarve Devassamantatathii/ (At the bottom of darbha, Brahma is situated while Keshava is in the middle and Shankara at the top, where as all the devatas reside throughout) Kusha hastena yagjnaptam daanam chaiva kushaissaha, Kushahasangya bhungete tasya sankhyaad navidyate/(Harita Muni states that all the tasks holding darbhas including yajinas, charities and even bhojana helps longevity) Kaushika Muni opines: Kushaasanam paramam putam Yateenaantu visheshatii, Kushhaasanopavishatsya siddhate yogamuttamah/(Darbasana especially to Yatis is stated to lead to results of Sacredness and Virtue) Kushaalabhe dvijasshreshthah kaashaaih kurvati yatnatah, Tarpanaadeeni karmaaani kaashaah kushasamah smritaah/ (Shankha Muni states that if kusha is unavailable, kaasha or grass near water flows might be substibuted while performing Tarpanas and such other tasks) Vasishtha defines darbhas as follows: Vishvaamitraah Kushaa kaashaah durvaaveeha evacha, Valvajaaschayavaasaachaiva sapta darbhaah prakeerititaah/ Kaasham tu Roudram vigjnayam kousham Braahham tathaa smritam, Arhantu dourvamaakhyaatam Vaishvaamitraanm tu Vaishnavam/ Kusham PavitramTaamram vaa Rajatam Hemachaivavaa, Bhhrayaadakkdhshine paanou pavitramchottarattaram, Kushakaashaadya bhavetu anye darbhaah adhocitiim/ (There are seven types of Darbhas viz. Vishvamitraas, Kushas or Darbhas, Kaashas, Durva, Vreeha, Valvaja and Yava grass. Kaasha is Rudra sambandhi, Kaasha is of Brahma’s significance, Daurva is signified by Rishis and Vishvamitraas are Vishnu related. A kusha or darbha is normally twisted and worn like a ring on the right ring finger, along with copper or silver or gold ring, and each of these combinaisons is superior as per the value of metal; any of these darbhas is as good as another; but when worn with copper it is not used)Harita Muni states: Maaghenabhasyamaa yaatu tasyaa darbhocchhayo
matah, Ayaatayaamaaste darbhaah niyojjyaa - ssuh punah punah/ Maasimaasyuddhrutaa darbhaah - maasi maasyeva choditaah, Samitpushpa kashaa- deeni shrotriyah svayamaaharet/ (The ideal time for securing darbhas would be Amavasyas of Maagha and Shraavana; till they are reused till completely worn out; in fact these darbhas would grow month after month. A Shrotriya or a puritan is normally expected to collect samidhas or fire wood, flowers and darbhas all by himself).

HOMA PRAKRARANA

Tena dravyaanya sheshaani prokshyaachamyaya punargruhe, Tatah karmaani kurveeta satkriyaascha dvijottama/Pulastya Muni prescribes that a noble dwija when fetches material from outside must first sprinkle water and get ready to take up acts of virtue; he should first perform ‘achamana’ and then proceed to execute the deeds) Upaasavyavidhivatsandhyaam upaasthaaya Divaakaram, Saayam Praatar - upaaseeta Vivaahaagnim dvijottama/(Having formally completed ‘sandhyaopashana’, the Dwija should then proceed with the rekindling of ‘Vivaahaagni’both in the mornings and evenings, states Harita Muni.) ApastamaMuni prescribes: Saayam Praatara urtvam hastenaiva aahutee tandulaaryavair vaaju huyaat, Shtaalipaakavadeavitam Souri purnaaahutih praatarityyeke ubhayatah parishcechanam yathaapurastaat// Yatrakvachanaagnimupasamaadhaasyan, Tatra praacheerudeescha tisro rekhaa likhitvaadbdhiravo -kshya Aignimupasaminindhyavad tischoitamadakamuttarena purvena vaanyadupadadhyaayat/ (Both in the mornings and evenings, the ‘aahutis’ of offerings to Fire God need to be performed with one’s hands either with rice or yavaas and as one does for ‘Sthaalipaaka’, the ‘aahuti’ or offering be made in favour of Surya Deva and then follow up with ‘parishechana’ or water sprinkling. After drawing three lines each in the eastern and northern sides from the place of where Agni is to be installed at the centre of the Fire Place, Agni be deposited while standing sprinkle water towards East/North) smaartamoupaaasane kuryaat shrotam vaiitaanikegrugi, Loukeke vidhuraaanam tu vidhiresha puratanah/ Bahavoyatra hotaarah Shantike poushthke tathaa, Loukaagnou tathaa kuryaat grihaagnouna kadaachana/ Shrotaam karma nache -cchaktah kartum smaartam samaacharet, Atraapya shaktascha karane sadaachaaram labhed buddhah/ (Vishnu Maharshi explains that smarta karma be executed in ‘Auopaasanaagni’ and ‘shrootakarma’ in ‘yagjna’ to create). A widower nomally performs in the Lokikaagni. Those who are desirous of executing homa prakriya when there is a gathering witnessing the homa, then they should do so in Shantika, Poushtika and Lokaagnis but not in the ‘Gruhyaagni’. In case Srouthaa Karma is not possible to perform, then Smarta Karma be executed; if even that is not possible, then ‘Sadaachara’ be done.) Home mukyho yaajamaah patni putrascha Kanyakaa, Ritvik shishyo Guru bhraataa bhaagineyaassutaapatih/Etareva hutam yatthu tadutham svayamevatu, Paryukshanamvinaa patni jhuyaat kanyakaaapiva/ (In any homa, one yajamani or master of ceremony is essential; now, his wife, son, daughter, Ritvik or Chief Priest, sishya, elder brother, sister\'s husband, son in law might be deputed. Wife and daughter too might perform with a proxy in their absence.) Garga Muni states: Krita daarona vaitishhetbksenamvayagnaavinaa,Tishtheta ched vijooaatayath tathaa chapatetito bhatve/ (A person who is much married with his wife alive should never leave Agni Karya, as he might be even known as a Brahmana without Samskaras like Upanayana ) Yohivtaa vivahaagnim grihastha iti manyate, Annantasanyaa bhoktayam vridhaa paakhosamritah/ (Vyas declares that in case a person feels that he is a Grihasti or a sincere house holder then he should not leave the habit of Vivahaagni and his eating food is a mere waste.) Katyayana Maharshi prescribes atonement of non executing Aoupasanaagni for as many years as he should have performed after his wedding, then a compensation of sixty measures of a ‘Pratha’ of rice and three prasthas of ghee be given away as charity for as so many years: Shashti prasthamitam dhaanyam
triprsthavitam ghritam, Aoupaasasanaagnou nashtetu vatsarasya vidheeyate/ Alternatively, nonperformance of Griha Agni by a householder as prescribed attracts a penalty of Dravya Daana to a good Brahnama in the measure of the non performance: Yaavakaala mamahomeesyaat taavaddravyam tvvsheshatat, taddhaanam chaiva vipreabhya yatha homastadhaivatat/ Further, Brihaspati suggests that if a Brahmana is unable to perform Shraddha due to Sutaka or Ashuchi of any kind, no proxy is allowed to perform Agni Karya on his behalf.

Homa Kaala and Homa Dravya: Adhi ruksha Surye Avisuryevaa, Anastamiti Aaditye saayamagnih praadushkarana manudite praatath/ Praatarhome sangavaantah kaalasrudita hominah, Saayamastamite homa kaalastu nava naadikah/ (Shroutaagni needs to be kindled at the timings of Sun Rise and Sun Set; Agni homa kaala is at the Sun set and before Sun rise; at the Sun Rise the homa prakriya be completed before Sangava and in the evening, nine ghadis after Sunset.) Eligible samidhas for the homa are: Palaasha khadira ashvattham shamyudumbarajaa samia, Apaamaargaarka durvaascha kusha chettyapare vidhuh/ (The homa samidhas are Palaasha, Khadira, Ashvattha, Shami, Umbataja, Apaamarga, Arka Durvaasa, and Kusha). Tulasi wood is stated to be excellent bestowing immense returns. Katyayana Maharshi further describes: Havistu trividham jneyam kritam chaiva kritaakritam, Akritam cha kramadeesaam lakshanam samyaguchyate/ Kritamodanaasa -kutvaad tundulaadi kritaakritam, Vreehyaadi chaakeritam praktm iti havyam tridhaa budhaih/ (The Havis or the material for the homa karya is mainly classified as Krita, Kritaakrita, Akrita; Cooked and beaten Rice is of the Krita variety; raw rice and such other material is of the kritaakrita while akrita is paddy.) Apastamba states: Payasaapashukaamasya, jaahuyaat dadhrendriya kaaamasya, yavaagyaa graama kaaamasya, odanena annaadhay kaamasya, tundulaa homyaah yavanaalaah priyam gavah/ (Those who desire to attain cattle wealth would perfom the homa with milk, for good physique with curd, lot of graama sampada with Yava dhanya, plenty of food with cooked rice, for achi ving youth with raw rice, for great name and fame homa with meat, for Brahma teja with ghee and one desirous of wife should perform with milk always!) Vyasa Maharshi opines: Kapilaayaastu payasaayegnihotraanyupaasate, Aditya mandalam bhitvaayaanti Brahma sanaatanam/ Yena saayam juhuyaat tena praatah/ (A person who worships Agni Deva with the milk of Kapila Cow would break into Surya mandala and gets absorbed in Sanatana Brahma himself! As he performs the homa in the evenings be also done in the morning too.) ‘Smrityartha saara’ gives a detailed account of the homa vidhana: Shaali shyaamaaka neevaara vreehi godhuma yaavakaah, Teshaaam tundulaa homyaah yavanaaalaaah priiyam gavah/ Neevaaraah shaalayaishaaiva godhumaavreehayoh yavaah, Svaruopenaiva homyaassyussvarupainaavaa vai tilaaah/ (The main ‘homa dravyas’ are ten viz. milk, curd, yava, soma rasa, oils and water. There is an ‘Agni samskaara’ without mantras viz...
offering meat after three times of prokshana or sprinkling of water. In case milk is not available, vreehi-
yava and such other seeds could be used, but maasha, vara, kodaara be avoided. There must in all be
sixteen ‘ahutis’ or offerings to Agni with ghee, tila of thirty two offerings, and sixty four ahutis of
dhaanya, measured as a large quantity of a ‘prastha’). Bodhaayana Maharshi provides further details:

Vreehaanaam vaayavaanaam vaa shatamaahutiripyate, Odanodviguno graahyo mayuraadaakritisthatha,
Kukkutaandam pramaanaastu pinda ityabhidheyete, Angushtha parva maatram syadava daanam tatopi
cha, Jyaayah svishakridaadyantu chatturangula sammitam// Angulyagrairnaratrayam sa krivantaanguli
bhedanam, Angulyuttara paashvena hotavyamiti smritih// Utaanenatu hastenaanguli paanistu vaagyaho
-juhuyaadvijah/ Vastrenavaatha parnenaavaa paanirupavadbhidaarubhih, Vyajanenaagni madhanam na
kuryaadithi smritih/ Dhamani mantare kritaatinam vaa kaashtamevavaa, Mukhaadagnim samintheeta
mukhaadagnirajaayata/ Bahu shushkendhano chaagnou susamiddhe hutaanane, Vidhume lenihane cha
hotavyam karmasiddhaye//(Aahutis to Agni are of vreehi, yava, and odana or cooked rice in double the
quantities and some two hundred pinda pramanas or of the thumb size egg like quantities. The Ahuti
karya should not be done by the finger tops but with all the fingers and thumb together towards the
northern side. The ahutis be done in silence with raised right hand making a fistful quantitypressed by all
the fingers. It is cautioned that Agni in the fire pit should not be quickened to flame up by fanning with
cloths, dried leaves, wooden pieces or hand fans. Using small pieces of wood or dried grass, the fire be
installed and using the mouth air through a metal tube enabled to flame up. The tongue be stretched out
and enable dried leaves and small figs to gradually raise the fire.) Apastamba suggests that the homa
karya should be executed according to one’s own ‘Vamsaachaara’ and carry with him the ‘nithya man-
dhana’ material or fetch from the house of a co-

Chaturatramahutognih loukikah
sampadyate// (In case Shrotriyas do not perform homa in their homes for four nights, then it becomes
Lokaagni!) Shouanaka Muni states: Agnaavanughate yatra homa kaaladvayam vrajet, Ubhayorvi
pravaasecha lokaagnirvidhheyate// ( As per the timing of the morning and evening homa prakriya, a
Shrotriya should plan the daily programme; in the event of Anugataagni and Dhaaraagni are missed then
lokaagni be initiated and enflamed). Bodhayana Muni explains the seriatum of failures of Agni Karyas
and prayaschittas: Arvaaktri raatraadayasegnaye syaattatah param Tantumateechankaaryaa, Aaa Sapta
raatraan manase cha hutvaa/ Advaadashaadhaat punaraadadhee ta/ Dvadasha dina paryantam
Agnyanugati praayachchita me voktam Naagni sandhaanam atra yadhaa svagrihyaam vyavasthaa//(For
three nights of discontinuing the regular daily Agni Karyas for what ever reason, there exists iron Agni; to
revive the Grihagni again the process called ‘tantumati’ be followed; for a week’s absence of Agni, the
person concerned should execute homa in one’s own mind and revive the Agni on the twelfth day; then
thereafter a Prayaschitta programe be taken up as per the domestic custom. Bodhayana also describes
three ways of Samaropana or revival: Ekaagneh trividha samaaropanam Atmasyaarayorvaa samitsuuvaa/
The three ways are as follows viz. repentance in one’s own mind and heart, performing homa prakriya
again in forests and with Samidhas. Maharshi Veda Vyasa cautions: Snaasyato Varunassshobhaam
juvatognih shriyam haret, Bhjojane mrityumaapnoti tasmaanmounam trishu smritam/ Conversation
while bathing is disliked Varuna Deva and in the course of Homa prakriya the God of Agni detests it just
as while taking food Mrityu Deva is annoyed; hence during these three acts of snaana-homa-bhojana,
silence needs to be observed strictly.) Angira Maharshi exclaims: Yo dadyaa kanchanam Merum
Prithveemvaa sa Saarraaam, Tatsaayam pratathomasya tulyam bhavati vaanaavai//(Could unparalleled
charities of golden Meru parvata and entire Earth along with the Oceans equate the returns of Homa
Karyas in the morning and evening daily!) Manu Shastra describes similarly: Agnou praastaahutih
samyak Adityamupatishtate, Adityaajjaayate vbrishtih Vrishterannam tatah prajaa, Daivekarmani yukto hi bibhartedam charaachar am,/ (The ‘ahutis’ offered to Agni as would reach Surya Deva, the latter is pleased and bestow optimal rains on earth which in turn provides plentiful food and prosperity to one and all; thus indeed the Daiva Karmas set the cycle of blessings to humanity!)

Brahma Yagna / Swaadhyaya: Brahma yagnena yakshyamaanah praachyaamdishi graamaada cchadiddarsha, Uдобhaam praauagudeechhyaam vodita Aditye/ (A person desirous of performing Brahma Yagna, should proceed far from his house towards east, or north or north east and select a clean place for the purpose. Kaala Darsha instructs as follows: Pratarmadhyandine vaapi Brahma Yagno vidheeyate prataryadi tadaa praaraahutyaah parato bhavet, Madhyaahne chettarpanaat praagvaishva devaat parutravaa/ (Brahma Yagna could be executed in the morning or afternoon. If planned for the morning then this should be followed by the morning ahutis and if planned in the afternoon then it should preceed Tarpanas or follow Vaishvadeva) Paithinis states: Swa shastraadhyayanam yattat Brahma yagnam prachakshate, Brahama yagna paro Vipro Brahma loke maheeyate/(Swashastra-adhyayana is considered as Brahma Yagna; a Vipra who practises Brahma Yagna achieves Brahma loka) Harita Maharshi states: Darbhaaseenah darbhapaanirbrahma yagna vidhataah, Braahmano Brahma yagnantu kuryaccha samanvitaah/(Brahmanas should perform Brahma yagna by seated on darbhas and holding darbhas and formally practise Brahma Yagna.) Brahma yagne japetsuktam Pourusham chintayan Harim, Sa sarvaaan japate Vedaan sangopaangaan vidhanataah/ (Brahma yagna be executed by reciting Purusha Sukta and Vedopanagas) Yagnyavalkyas instructs as follows: Hutaavgeen Surya daivatyaan japdmantraan samahitah, Vedardhaanadhihacchecha Shastraani vividhaanicha/ Tulasyamritaa sambhute sadaatvam Keshava priye, Khevaahrdham lunaami tvaaam varadaa bhava shobhane/ Moshaika heto dharani prabhute Vishnoh samastasya guroh preeyete, Araadhanaahdham Purushottamasayalunaam patram tulase kshamasva/ Praseeda mama Deveshi praseeda Harivallabhe, Ksheeroda madhanodbhute Tulasi tva praseeame/Aaravaaare Shukrecha Manvaadishu yugaadishuchaa, Naahahetutulasiipartam madhyaahnaat paratohani /Samkraanyaam pakshayorante Dvadashyaam nishisanyayoh, Tulasim ye vichinvanti krudanti te Hareh shirah/ ( While rendering ‘ahutis’ to Agni, one should recite Surya deva related mantras and absorb their essence, besides improving the knowledge of Veda-Shastras. Then plucking the leaves of Sacred Tulasi, address her with salutations as Amrita Sambhuta, Sada Keshava Priya, Shobhana, I am plucking these leaves with the express desire of worshipping Vishnu! Even as you are born to Bhu Devi, you are the beloved of Vishnu as generated at the time of Samudra Mathana. Do consider my salutations. Tulasi leaves should not be plucked on Tuesdays and Fridays as also in the afternoons, and Tulasi Vrata should not be performed in the ‘Manvaadis’ and ‘Yugadis’. The leaves of Tulasi should not , repeat not, be plucked on Sankrantis, Amavasyas, Dvadashi nights, and Sandhya times as that would tantamount to plucking Hari’s head!) Hareeta Maharshi instructed as follows: Sanchityapopyavargasya bharanaadham chvichashanah, Ishwaram chaiva kaaryaardham abhigacchedijottamah/Maata pitaa Gururbharyaa praajaa daasasamaashtitaah, Abyagatotichaagini proshya varga udaahritah/ Jnaatir bandhu janaksheenah tathaamaathah samaashtitaah, Anyopi dhanahenatu poshyaa varga udaahritah, Bharanamposhyaa vargyasa prashastam swarga saadhanam/ Sajeevayi evaikobandhubhishopa bhujyate, Jeevantopimritaastyan Purushaah svodaram bharaaah/ (A dvija has to deeply cogitate as to how to balance his income-expenditure account intelligently on account of the expenses for his parents, Guru, wife, children, servants, dependents, guests and ‘Agni poshya varga. The last category includes ‘saha vamsheeyas’, relatives, patients, Anaadhas or the Helpless ones, the extremely poverty stricken
persons and these are all the Poshya Varga! It is he who eats along with his kinsmen and women all together and those who look after themselves only are as good as dead!) Vyasa Muni instructs that he who is a genuine Dvija who performs Sandhya vandana early morning when Stars still appear on the sky, then performs Snaana Karmas, Madhyaanika Sandhya, and Sayam Sandhya! After ‘aachamana’, he should perform ‘Svaadhyaya’, Deva-Pitru-Rishi tarpana stating ‘pranava’ and ‘tarpayaami’ to all. Tarpana: Tarpanas are to be performed as prescribed with Akshatas and water to Deva-Brahma-Rishis and with ‘tilas’ and water to Pitru devatas. Deva tarpanas with Savya Yaginopaveeta and Pitru tarpanas on ‘praacheenaaveeti’. Harita Maharshi again instructs: Vasitvaasasanam shushkam sthale visteerna arishi, Vidyijnastarpanam, kuryaat na paatreshakadaachana/ Yadyashakto grihe kuryat tarpanam salilam tathaa.Tilaan prakshipyay praatatethe jale vyaamishritaistilaih/ Paatraantarekshipedatra

Deva Puja: Svashaabhokta kriyam kriva hutva chaivaagnihotram, Kuryadaaraahanam Vishnoddeva devasya chakrinah/(Whatever is prescribed in one’s own ‘Veda Shakha’, he is duty bound to perform all the duties including Agni Karyas and worship Vishnu the Devadeva Chakri) Kurveeta Devataa pujaam japaagnayad anantaram/ (Hareeta Muni stipulates that Deva Puja is a must after japa homa duties.) Vignyaneshvara details the procedure of Deva Puja: Madhyaane tarpanaanantaram gandha kusumaak shatai Harihara, Hiranya garbha prabhritinaam anyatamayamayaathaa vasaansanam, Rigyajyuroasamsa mantraah svanaama bhirvaa tatprakaaraaihi, Chaturdhanvair namaskaarao yuktairadhayet/Aerogyam Bhasaraadicchet shriyamicchet moksha micchejanardanaat/(After performing mid-day tarpanas, a Brahmana should invoke Brahma-Vishnu-Maheshwaradhi Devas with gandha-pushpa-akshatas reciting Rik-Yajur-Sama Veda mantras or so endi ng with chaturthi vibhakti naamaas like Haraye namah om, Vishnave namah om or Brahmame namah om etc. He should pray Surva deva for health, Agni of prosperity, Ishwara for knowledge and Janardana for Salvation) Manu assures: Adityamadhavaa Vishnum Isham Brahmaamaa vecha, Archayed Vaidikamantraih girihsathiyah prayatah bhatve/ (Grihastha could worship Surya, Vishnu, Ishwara or Brahma with suitable mantras to accomplish purity of mind and thought) Adityamambikaam Vishnum Gananaadham Maheshwaram, Pancha yagnya paro nityam Grihastah Panchapujayaat/(A grihasta who is engaged in Deva- Pitru-Manushya- Bhuta- Brahma Yagnyas should worship five Swarupas of Paramatma the Almighty viz. Surya-Devi-Vishnu-Ganeshe- and Shiva)

taambula pradakshina namaskruti, Usvaasanam chakramnashah kuryaat pujaaparaayanah/ (Those persons of virtue worship Vishu by executing Agni Homa to reach him beyond the Skies, the ordinary devotees pray to him in the form of Pratimas or idols, but Yogis retain Him in their minds and hearts. Indeed wherever Saalagraama Stones and Dwaravati Mandira converge to a person of faith, he attains Salvation undoubtedly; it is strongly believed that as sincere worship toVishnu in the form of Saalagrama Stone is performed , which ever Souls departing from their lives around many yojanas would achieve Vaikuntha! Recital of Purusha Sukta while perfoming Puja to Vishnu is undoubtedly far reaching as that Sukta is the hidden essence of Vedas. This Purusha Sukta is bound by three significant bonds of Vishnu as Purusha, Universe as Narayana and Anushup as the Chhandas or prosody in meters! Vishnu Puja is famed as of eighteen steps comprising in Avahana or Invocation, Aasana or Seat, Padya or wash of feet, Choshya, Paaneeyas, proverbially called Pancha Bhakshya Naivedyaas; Tambula, Pradakshina, Namaskaara, Udvasana or Send off by Geeta-Nritiya-Vaahanaadis. All these Eighteen Upacharas or Services are destined to please the Lord!) Ashtaaksharena Devesham Narayana manaamayam, Gandhi Pushpaadibhiritryam archayadachyutam nara/ Gandhapushpaadi sakalam anenaiva niveyat, Anainevaarchito Vishnuh preeto bhavati takshanaat/ Kimtsya bahubhirmantraith kintasya bhubhir-mukhiai, Namy Naraaayanetimandar Sarvaaradh saadhakah(Bhagavan Narayana is known by innumerable names and titles like Anaamaya, Achyuta, Devesha and so on. He is stated to be pleased with the mantra of ‘Om Namo Naraayanaaya’ and as He is worshipped with Gandha-Pushpa- Naivedyas, he then instantly becomes mighty happy. Why indeed so many Mantras and Services are required! He is happy when a single salutation uttering ‘Namo Narayana’ with heart and Soul which indeed is an all purpose way of winning him over! ) Pulastya Muni describes: Dadyaadeenaam vikaaraanaam Ksheeram tassambhavo yathaa, Tathaivaasheshakaamaanaam ksheera snaapanato hareh/ Kumku maagaru shri kantha kardamam,acuyhyaata kritim, Aalipy Bhaktvaa devesham kalpa koti vaseddivi/(Even as milk could lead to several types of formulations like curd, butter milk, butter and so on , the base material of milk if used for an ‘Abhisheka’ or ‘Mantra yukta Snaana’ of Vishnu, then that ‘Ksheeraabhiseka’ is sure to fulfill several desires of the devotees. Given staunch faith and devotion, application of Kumkuma-Agar- Chandana on the Lord’s body would certainly reserve comfortable stay in His place and His presence for crores of Kalpas! ) Sveta rakta sarojaani neelaraka to tathotpale, Sitotpalamcha krishnasya dayitaani sadaa hareh/ Neeparjuna kadambaischhavakulaisc sugandhibhih, Kalhaarairvishnu mabhyaarchyaya Vishnu lokesmaheeyate/ (Aachaara Saara describes: Thousand and eight wives of Lord Krishna were present in various combinations of coloured lotus-like ones, some red, some black, some white and so on. Now such wide variety of lady- like lotuses mixed with further fragrances of a variety of other flowers too like Kadamba, Kalhara, Vakula and so on are all worthy of Vishnu Puja; indeed sincere worship to Maha Vishnu with such flowers and fragrances should most certainly lead the path to Vishnu Loka!) Maharshi Moudgalya assures that Sacred Tree Leaves are not far behind in the service Lord Vishnu: Sakrudabhyarcha Govindam bilva patrena maanavah, Mukti gaami nirraantakah Krishnasya anucharo bhavet/ Sugandha tulasi patrai pratiyamyaassamantatah, Nishcchidramaa -charedyastu sonantaphala -maapnuyaat/ Those sincere bhaktas who worship Govinda with ‘bilva patras’ even occasionally would enjoy followership of the Lord Krishna without any hindrances. A true devotee of Madhava earnestly covers up the Lord’s ‘Vigraha’ full body with Tulasi Leaves while reciting his varied names and titles would achieve eternal fruits as his returns) Devaagaare dvijaanaam cha deepam datvaa
chatuspadhe, Medhaavee Jnnaa sampannah chakshushmaan jaayate narah/ Havishyaallodanam divyam aaijayuktam sasharkaram, Naivedyam devadevasya yaavalam paayasam tatha/Samskrutam cha annamaajjajayuktam dadhi kheera madhuuni cha, Phala moola vyajanaani modakam cha nivedayet/ Havirdhaanam trikaalamutu utaamottamamuchyate, Dvayoscha madhyamam proktam ekaakaledhamam havih/ (Samvarta states:Those who give away in charity by way of Deepa daana in temples, to Dvijas, at four road points would be blessed to become great ‘medhavis’ or highly learned ones with knowledge, mercurial brain and instant grasp. The naivedya or heart felt offering to Deva Deva, especially of ghee cooked sweet rice or of yavas with milk as ‘havis’, is mention worthy. So is the sacred offering of rice cooked in ghee, besides curd, milk, honey, fruits, and modakas. To perform ‘Havis daana’ three times a day is indeed most significant, twice a day of significant too, but a Dvija is stated to give away the havis in charity is the least that could be done!)

Shiva Puja: Kurma Purana lays stress on recital of appropriate Mantras while performing Rudraabhi-shekhas and worship: Aaraadhayen Mahadevam bhavaputo Maheshwaram, Mantrena Rudra Gayatryaa pranavenanaadhavaa punah / Ishaane naathavaa Rudrai Tribambakena samaagitaah, Punyaih patrairadhaa Adhbirvaa chandanaadadhaa maheshwaram/ Tathonnamahivayetv mantrenaaena vaayajet/ (Mahadeva Maheshwara is pleased with Rudra Gayatri or Pranava Mantras besides ‘Tatpurushaaya vidmame Maha devaaya dhhemahe; Aghorebhyo thagorbhya ghoraghora tarebhhyaah; Sadyojaatam prapadyaami Sadyo jaataayavai namah; Vaama devaaya namo Jyeshthaaya namah shreshthaaya namo Rudraaya namah; Ishaanassarva vidyaaanaam Ishwarar sarva bhutaanaam and so on or Triambakam yajnaah sugandham pushhti vardhanam, urvaarukamiiva bandhanat mrityor muksheeya maamritaat’ as also gandhaanulepana and abhishka with Sacred waters; alternatively perform yagna with ‘Namasshivaaaya’ mantra!) Yah prayacchedgavaam laksham dodhgreenaam veda parage,Ekaahmar chayellingam tasyha punyam tatodhikam/ ( The maha punya that one could attain in giving away in charity to a Veda Pandita of a lakh of milch cows excels that of worshipping a Shiva Linga for a day as prescribed, states Nandishwara) Linga darshanam punyam darshanaat sparshanam param, Sparshanaad archaaam shreshtham archanaaddhyaanaaandane, Maase maasetumamshneeyaad yaavajeevaam dwijottamam, yastvarchayet sarkrillingam satyam tanna samshayah/ (Linga darshanam by itself enables one to reap punya; linga sparsha or touch of a Shiva Linga is better than darshana; Lingaarchana would be far more effective while dhyana tandana besides lingarchana indeed yields highest possible returns as equivalent to treating a dwijottama to life long facility of bhujana with veneration as described in Chandrika Grandha) Ayutam yo gavaaam daadyaat dodhghreenaam Vedaparage Vastra hemaadi yuktanaam ksheera snaamaya tatphalay/ Dadhnaayah snaapayellongam krishnaashtamayaam uposhitah Kula saptakamuddhruta Shiva loke mahaa nityaantikam/ Padakoti sahasreena yatpaapam samupaarjitaam, Ghrita snaanena tatsarvam dahatayagnivendhanam/ Payodadhi ghritakshoudhra shankaadrayukramaat Ishaadhi mantraih snaapya Shivam muktiavamvapnuaat/ Gandhaya chandana toyena yo Lingam snaaypayet sakrit, Gandharva lokamavaapnoti sagandharyashcha punyay/ Vaasaamsi suvichitra nai,saravanti mriduni cha, Dhripitaani Shevaadayaat viikleshaani navaanicha/ Punyairanaya sambhuhat patrairva giri sambhavain, Atmaaramoddbhavaaupanyaapunyayecchivam/ Yaavantastandula -asmin naivedyo parismahyayaa, Taavadyuga sahasraanui swarga loke mahayeet/ Gudakhandha ghritaanaan cha bhakshyaaam nivedane, Ghrtna paanchitaanaam cha daanaacchhaata gunam phalam/ (Smriti Ratna describes that charity of ten thousand milch cows, vastras, gold and other material gets far outweighed by a single ‘Ksheeraabhisheka’ of Shiva Linga. Observing complete fasting on Krishna -
ashtami and performing Rudrabhisheka with curds yields the fruits of Kailasha of seven generations. ‘Shiva Lingaabhishheka’ would dissolve the heavily stored sins of ‘kalpakoti’ births of one’s existence as though fire gradually turn the heaps of wood. One is sure to attain ‘mukti’ by performing ‘Shivaabhisheka’ with Ishaanaadi Mantras with milk, curd, ghee, honey, sugar and such appropriate materials. Abhishekas with chandana and such other fragrant materials would bless the performer with Gandharva Loka prapti. After the ‘Abhisheka’ dressing up the Shiva Linga with attractive clothing of coloured, soft and flawless variety. Also varieties of multi coloured flowers and tree leaves of freshness and aroma from wild forests and hill tops, apart from one’s own gardens, be utilised to decorate the Shiva Linga profusely. Naivedya of cooked foodgrains of as many numbers as possible would bestow ‘Swarga Loka prapti’ for the same number of centuries of years. Also the naivedya of ‘Bhakshyas’ prepared with devotion and faith would yield hunfred fold more.) A word of caution by Parashara Maharshi is sounded however as follows: Martya buddhirgurou, yasya Shiva Linga shilaamat ih, Shabda buddins tu mantreshu sa khalu Brahma haa bhavet/ (Those persons who consider one’s Guru as but a human being, Shiva Linga as a mere piece of stone and the Sacred Mantras as sounds of cacophony are equated to those who have committed Brahma hatya sin! Vaishvadeva homa: Dvijah Purusha Suktyas vidhinaa Vishnumarchayet, Vaishvadevam tatah kuryaat balikarma vidhanatah/ (A perfect example of a dvija is so qualified as having performed ‘archana’ as per Purusha Sukta and then take up Vaishvadeva homa and Bali Karma as prescribed, states Harita Muni). Yasminagnou bhavetpaakah Vaishva devastu tatraiva, Tatraahutvaas yo bhunke kilbisham narah / (Chandrika is quoted stating that the Agni in which ‘Vaishvadeva homa’ is performed is to be the same as the food cooked and offered to Agni besides the left overs eaten later by the Kartas.) Tatparya Darshani states: Panchamahaa yagnehbyah prithagvaishva devam prakaranantaaraat, sanjnyaabhedaaaccha karma bheadaaavagateh ata eva/ Bhashe Vaishvadevasya teshaaam cha prayogah prithagevopapaaditah/ (Vaishvadava is distinct and different from Pancha Maha Yagnas and elsewhere Pancha Yagnas are already described) Pancha soonaa grihasthaya vartateharahassadaa, Khandine peshini chullee jala kumbha maarjani/ Etaabhirvaahan Vipro badhyatevai muhurmuuhuh, etasam pavanaardhaaraya Pancha Yagnaas prakalpitaa/ (Yama Deva states that in every household there are five instruments of ‘Jeeva Himsa’ viz. ‘Khandini’ or kichen cutter made of iron or sharp metals, ‘peshani’ or pounding and pasting appliances, chulli or cooking hearth, jalakumbha or water storage vessel and maarjani or washing and sweeping appliances; it is to atone these sins of violence that Pancha Yagnas are performed.) Vaishva - devam balthutim pratyaham grihamedhinisha Saaaya praatascha kurveeran soonaadai paapanuttaye/ Prajapati states that to save oneself from the sins committed as above, every Grihastha would be required to perform Vaishvadeva every morning and evening. But before performing Vaishvadeva homa, ‘shakala homa’ needs to be performed. Apastamba Sutras precribe the procedure as follows: Aoupaasane pachane vaashadhbiraaadvaaih prati mantra hastena juhuyaat, Ubhayaat parishechanam tathaa purastaat, Shadbhiraadyaiah Agnaye svaaha, Somaaya svaaha, Vishvebhyo Devebhyo svaaha, Dhruvaaya Bhumaya svaaha, Dhruva nakshatatraye svaaha, Achyuta kshhitaye svaahaa ityayah Agnaye svishta krite svaahaa iti saptamam juhvati/ (The Vaishvadeva homa has six mantras for Aoupasana and Pachana and each of these are to be initiated after ‘parishechana’ or of water sprinkling in the formal manner followed by the svaha mantras of: Agnaye svaaha, Somaaya svaaha, Vishvebhyo Devebhyo svaaha, Dhruvaaya Bhumaya svaaha, Dhruvaaksitaye svaaha, Achyuta kshhitaye svaaha, Agnaye svishta kritaye svaaha; this is how the homa is to be performed) Goutama describes: Agnaavagnirdhanvatarir
Vishva devaah prajaapatih svishtakruditi homaah/ (The Svishta krit homas in Agni are required to be executed to Agni, Dhanvantari, Vishva devas, Prajapati and svishtakrit) Katyayana prescribes the method of the Homa in one’s own residence commencing with invocations seeking the ‘Anumati’ or approval of Brahma, Prajapati and Kashyapa Muni: 

Atha yadhaa svashastra vyavasthaa Vaishvadevam prakur -veeta,Svashastraabhiihitam tahaav yasya yaavat svagrihoktam svalpam vaa yadi bahu vaa, yasya svagrihoktam svalpa vaa yadi bahuvaav, tasyataavati Shastraartha kreite sarvam kritam bhavet \textit{Ity Vyasa smaranaat}/ (This is the method of performing Vaishva Deva, especially whatever is prescribed for doing it in one’s house, neither less nor more, as said by Veda Vyasa.) Vyasa Deva states that this needs to be performed with full flames as the Karta would go blind! Vyasa further describes: 

\textit{Juhu yaat sthapihaa - bhyaktam tailakshaara vivarjitam, Dadhyuktam payasaabhyaktam tadabhavembu naapivaa}/ ( In this homa, the ‘homa dravyas’ are ghee, mustard seeds, curd, milk or even water, but not oil or chillies) Apastamba states: 

Aryaah prayataah Vaishvadevenna samskaartaarasyuh Aryaah trivatikaah/ (Aryas of trivarnas viz. Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishyas are normally required to perform Anna homa in this connection. Yagnavalkya further prescribes that the remainder of ‘Devata homaanna’ be utilised for the purpose of ‘bhuta bali’: 

\textit{Devebhyastu hutaadannaat sheshaad Bhutabalim haret, Annam bhumou chan-daala vaayasebhyas cha nikshipet, Samkshaalana madhavaanneninayet praagugadishi}/ (The bhuta bali is meant for the lowest and very poorest class of the Society and crows to be kept in the ast and north directions of the house) Vyasa further describes: 

\textit{Vaishva devastu kartavyo Deva Yagnyassavaismritah, Devebhyastu hutaadannaacc he shadbhuta balim haret}/ Bhuta yagnyassavigneynah Bhutidar sarva dehi – naam, Shraaddham vaa Pitru yagnyasyat Pitryo balirathaapiva/ (It is essential that Vaishva deva is required to be done as that is Deva Yagnya; The left over Anna needs to be utilised fr bhuta bali as that is considered as Bhuta yagnya as that assures prosperity; Shraaddha is considered as Pitru yagna or Pitru Bali.) 

Ekapaakena vastaam pitrudeva dvijaarchanam, Ekam bhavedvibhaakaanaam tadevasyaad grihe giri/ It is adequate that cooking of Anna be done once a day, as that is commonly utilised for Pitru, Deva, Dvijarchana. Also the Shraaddha karma be done first, and there after having formally sent away the Vaishvaadi Karmas be executed later.)

\textit{Aatitdhyavidhi: Abhyaagato jnaata purvastvaginaatotithiruchyate/ Ajnaata kulagotratstu adhvashraanto bubhulksitah, Sampraapto Vaishvadevante sotihi swarga samkramah/ Atityhim pujayedystu shraantam chaa druashhataagatam, Savrisham goshhatam tena dattam syaaditime mathih}/ (Veda Vyasa defines Atithi as a person who arrives at one’s door step is unknown even while ‘Abhyaagata’ is the person already familiar. As soon as the Vaishvadeva is concluded in anybody’s home, any Atithi arriving at the house with hunger and thirst must necessarily be given food and water without seeking to ascertain his family credentials etc. as a bounden duty as that act of consideration would lead to heavens) Apastamba Sutras require the following duty: 

\textit{Atitheenavaagre bhojayedbaalaan vridhaan rogasmambhdaan streeshchan - tarvatnee}/Food be provided to Atithis, children, the elderly, the sick, carrying women and ‘Suvasinis’ on priority basis)Vishnu Purana prescribes: 

\textit{Tatassuvaasini duhkhii garbhini vridd baalakaa, Bhojayet satkritaannena prathamam tu param gaihi}/Well cooked hot meal be first served to Garbhinis, the aged and kids first ad then the Grihastas eat later) Paraashara details as to how the guests be treated:

\textit{Atithim tatra sampraaptam pujayet svaagataadinaa, Tathaaaa pradaanenapada prakshaalanenacha/ Shraaddha aachaannaa daaena priya prashnoottarenacha, Gacchataschaasnaaayena preeti mutpaadayet grihi/ Na prucchet gotrcharanena svaadhyaayam Shrutam tathaa, Hridayae kalpayeddevam sarvadevamayoh sah}/ (Grahasthis are required to welcome with respect, provide a comfortable seat, give food with a feeling of
being at home, converse with friendliness and send off with a sense of satisfaction, without show off and arrogance considering that an Aththi is a Devata. Manu Smriti cautions: 

Athitiryasya bhagnato grihastati, Pitarastasya naashayanti dasha varshaani pancha cha, Kaashtha bhaara sahasrena ghrita kumbha shatena cha, Athithiryasya bhanaashah tasya homo nirasthalah/(In case guine and needy guests are turned out from one’s house with impudence then his Pitru Devatas would curse the Grihasthi to be punished by having to carry loads of thousands firewood and hundrds of ghee tins for fifteen years and all the homa karyas and other brahmanical duties are made to badly affect their good returns.) On the other hand, Vyasa assures: 

Atithim pujayedystu shraantam chaa drushtamaagatam, Sa vrisham goshtam tena dattam syaaditi mematih/( In the event of an unexpected guest arriving home suddenly and fortunately, the Guest be honoured whatever difficulties are faced on one’s own home front, then for sure the fruitful returns far exceed expectations as equivalent to the receipt of hundred cows and oxen) Hareeta Muni states: 

Bhaktyaacha Shakti to nityam Vishnumabhyaarchya saadaram, Bhikshaancha bhikshave dadyaat Parvraak Brahmacharine, Vishnurerava yatischa- yam iti nischitya bhaavayet, Yatiryasya grihe bhunkte tasya bhunkte jagatrayam/(If a grihasti after Vishnupuja provides hearty meals to Brahmachari and Yati considering him as Vishnu shall certainly reap life long fulfillment of worldly desires in toto!

Bhojana nirmaya:

Panchaardre bhojanam kuryaat prangmukho mounmaasthitah, Hastou Paadou tathaa chaasyameshu panchaardrataa matala/ (A dvija is to face east and be seated with ‘Panchaadrata’ or maintain wet on both the palms, two feet and the mouth, says Vyasa) Devala Maharshi prescribes: Padou prakshalya hastou cha dvirachamyaa vaagyatah, raangmukhonmaani bhumjeeta sdhuchi peethamadhishthithiha/ ( one should wash the feet and hands and be seated down on a ‘peetha’, a wooden plank, to perform two ‘Achamanas’ or taking water from the right palm and commence the bhojana). Achamyaiva cha bhumjeeta bhuktvaas chopasprushedapah, Anaachaastu yoshneeyaat prayaschitteeyatehisah/ (A bhojana without achamana and touching water calls for a Prayaschitta or atonement). Atri Muni requires to keep one’s feet on ground but on the seat while eating with cleanliness and silence and that type of an ideal bhojana yields ‘atiratra phala’. But, to keep on one’s feet on the seat is forbidden as that tantamounts to ‘Go maamsa bhakshana’! Manu states: Ayushyam prangmukho bunkte Yashasyam Dakshina mukho, Shriyam pratyanmukho bhunke rutambhunkte hyudanmukhaah/ (Taking bhojana facing East bestows longevity, facing South provides good reputation, facing West yields opulence and facing North fetches ‘Varchas’) Apastamba suggests : Yatnena dharayed viprah pavitram dakshine kare, bhunjaanastu visheshena chaamna doshaairna lipyate/ ( Wearing a darbha tied to right hand while taking food would demolish all types of deficiencies of the food consumed) Bhojana paatras or food vessels be made of gold, silver, bronze or aluminium. A brahmachari, or widow or Yati is disallowed eating in bronze plates nor resort to oil baths and betel leaf consumption. Pracheta Muni states: Panasaamra naalikera kadali bilva patrake, Bhojanan kaamsya paatrena chandraayana phalam labhet/ Palasha padma patreshu grihi bhukvaindavam charet, Brahmachari yateenaantu chandraayana phalam labhet/ (Pracheta Muni explains that eating in panasa, mango, coconut, plantain, and bilva leaves fetches the blessing of having performed ‘chandraayana vrata’; but bhojana in palaasha and lotus leaves demands performing the same vrata! If this kind of positive type of bhojana is consumed, brahmacharis and sanyasis are stated to have performed chandraayana vrata’s punya.) Manu prescribes ‘bhojana karana vidhana’or the method of good eating: Pujayedashanam nityam adyaacchaitada kutsayan, Pujitam- hyashanam nityam alamurjam prayacchati/
Always bhojana is worship-worthy and should never be found fault with! This type of proactive way of eating—without expressing criticism or personal preferences of taste, form and colour would secure satisfaction and strength) Sumantu states: *Annam nidhaapya daryyaatu na hastena kadaachana, Pujaayitvaa tadannam cha aaposhanantu samantrakam/ (Annam should never be served with hand but only with a ladle or server; it should be worshipped with mantras and eaten after duly performing ‘Aouposhana’) Vyasa details the following: *Annam driishtvaa pranamyaaadou praanjalijih kathayettaatah, Asmaakam nityamastvetat iti bhookyathaavandyayet/ (On seeing food, first greet it with hands and say: ‘Asmaaka nityamastvetat’) After reciting the Gayatri Mantra, ‘abhimantrya’ and ‘Satyamdvartenaa parishanchhaama’ during the day time and for night bhojana : ‘Rutamtvaa satyena parishanchhaami’ be uttered. Gokhila Muni is quoted here: *Vyahriiti bhigrayaatyraa- bhimatraasya rutam twaam satyena parishinchhaamee saayam satyam tvartenaa pareeshinchhaamiti praatath parishenchhaamaeeti praatath parishichhet/(Parishechana or sprinkling of water be done along with Gayatri Mantra with vyajhritis or extensions, and perform ‘Abhimantranaa’ reciting Satyam tvartenaa parishin- chaami / Rutamvaa satyena parishinchhaami.) Svaahaantaaah pranavaa -dyasha naamnaamantraaastu Vaayavavah, Jihvayaittatrasaaddannam dashanaitstu samsprushet/ (Shaunaka muni says that at this juncture, the dvija should commence taking ‘Anna’ in the fingers reciting: Om pranaya svaaha, om Apanaya svaaha, om vyanaya svaaha, om udaayanaaya svaaha, om samaanaya svaaha or the Pancha Pranas, om Brahmane svaaha the sixth word, without yet touch the teeth) Smriti saara describes further: *Madhya- maanaamika angushtthaih grihetenam mitam punah, Pranaaya chetya paanaay vyaanaayacha yathaakramam/ Udaanaaya Samaanaaya svaaheti juhuyaat kramaat/ (Annam should be picked up in small morsels by right middle and ring finger pressing the thumb and take in reciting Pranaya svaaha, Apanaya svaaha, Vyaanaaya svaaha, Udaanaya svaah and Samaanaya svaaha as though performing homa into the mouth of fire!)}Ravissomastathaah chaagnirvyaayuh parjanya evacha, Param Brahmane tathaaitaascha Devataah parikeeritaah/ Vaamena paatram sprushtaai praanaahut yatha chaaret, Praanena vishta ityadi svaahaachaivaahutir bhavet, Evam praanaahuteerhutvaa tathaa chaatmaahutih tadaa/ (While touching the jalapatra with his left hand, the bhokta should glorify Surya Chandras, Agni, Vayu,Varuna and Parabrahma and perform ‘ahutis’ in their favour with the mantra of Pranenaivishta Suryaya svaaha, Chandraya svaaha and so on and then the Atmaahuti to the Self, as detailed by Krishna Bhatta in Ahnika saara sangraha) Atri Maharshi states: *Shabdenaapah peetvaa shabdena ghrita paayasam, Shabdenaapo-shanam kritvaa suraapanam samam bhavet / While in the process of the bhojana, the slurp sounds of water, milk, ghee paayasa and the like are as satisfying as ‘Suraapaana!’) Vyasa describes that during the course of Bhojana, the dvija is to maintain silence: *Mounam vaacho nivritti syaat naatra bhaashaana samskritam, Naanya daiveranam Vishnuu sadaa dhyaayeccha keertayet/ Devataahbhidhaanam cha prrayatah ityaoastamba vachanam devataantarata vishhayam/ Kabale kabale chaiva kuryaadgovinda keertanam, Naashoucham keertanastaya pavitram Bhagavan harih/ (The silence that one has to maintain during the bhojana is neither to hold the tongue, nor to dis-use the language, but mainly to be engaged in ‘dhyaana’ or meditation of Vishnu with his several names like Keshava, Narayana, Madhava, Govinda and Madhusudana. Each gulp of food that the bhokta takes in, would purify the intake and glorify the Lord!But at the same time Shandilya Muni says that since one has to ask to break the silence occasionally as to what items of food were to be served as repeats, it is not always possible but to break the silence as and when required!) Markandeya prioritizes the eats at the bhojana: *Ashneeyaatmannaaah bhutvaa purvantu madhtam rasam Lavanaamlou tathaa madhive katutiktadikam tataah/ Praak dravyam purusho -shneeyaan madhyetuu kathinachashanam, Ante punardravashetuu balaarogyena munchati/ (While
commencing the bhojana, the first item for consumption should be a sweet juice, then savouries, in between try bitter and sour items, hard eats, liquids etc.) Vyasa forbids eating as follows: Hastashvya rathayaanoshtramaa sthitonaiva bhakhayet, Smashaanaabhyamasthovaa Devaalaya gatopiva/ Shayanastho bhunjeeata na paanisthanma chaasane, naardravaasaar noadrashirana chaayaginopave-tavaan/ Na veshitaa shiraschaapi notsanga krita bhajanah, Naika vastro dushta madhye sopaanata – sapaadukah/ Na charnopari samsthasha charmaa -vestita paarshravaan/ Graasa sesham na chaashneeyaat peetga shesham nibennaara, Shaaka mula phalekshunaa danta chhedaainia bhakhayet/ Bahoonaam bhunjataam madhyena chaashneeyaat -varaavinitah, Vridhaanavikaredannam nocchishtah kutrachit vrajet/(One should not eat seated on an elephant, horse, chariot or camel, nor in a burial ground, a temple or in a bed; food is also forbidden to be consumed on a seat, with wet clothes, wet hair or without yagnopaveeta the Sacred Thread. Bhojana is forbidden with stretched legs, with hands on the feet or thighs and in a bed. Meals should not be taken with wet clothes, or wet hair and without yagnopaveeta. Bhojana is also forbidden with covered head, with a single vastra, keeping a plate on the thighs, in the company of bad elements, on steps, with footwear, and seated on skins and leather items. One should not eat from others plates nor drink other’s water or drinks. Half cooked items be avoided and teeth should not be strained trying hard fruits and sugarcane .One should try to keep pace with co-eaters, not disorder the amount served and never consume ‘ucchishtha’ or half consumed items of others much less carry it elsewhere.) Yastveka pamktou vishamam dadaati snehaadbhayaadyadivaardha hetoh Vedeshu drishita mrishibhischa geetaam taam Brahma hatyaam munayo vadanti/ (Yama states that in case a grihastu serves food better and partially to a person in a ‘pankti’ or a line of guests either due to friendship or fear or any other consideration then Vedas and Rishis warn him of the great sin of Brahma hatya!) Parashara Muni declares: Eka panktyupavishtaanaam dushkritam yadduraatmaanaam, Sarveshaam tatsamam taavad yaavapunikthinabhidyate/Agninaa bhasmanaa chiva stambhena salileni cha, dvaarenachaiva margena pankti bhedo budhai smritah/(In case there is even one element of mischief in a ‘pankti’ or a line of guests, then the blemish would have to be shared by all in that pankti! This is so because even if there are fires, or ashes, or a pillar, or a threshold or a demarcating lane; this is what wise men believe!) Smrti Ratna describes certain do’s and don’ts in the context of bhojanas: Shayanastha bhunjeta na paanistham na chaasane, Sakuryaat skandanam shabdam krodhamanyatra chinianam/ Shishunaam bhartrunam chaapii shvachandaalaadi darshanam, Ashuchinaam tatha madhye prekshataamapya nashnataam, Naakale vishayuktamchanaashnee yadahutam tatha/ Ucchshta sparshaan jnaatvaa tat paatram parihiyatcha, Tatah paschaadgovayena Bhumin samanulipyacha/ Anyatiapram vidhaayaiva tadanmm pariveshayet, Parishyaamchyaatha bhunjieeta bhojanetuna doshabhaak/Eka panktishu bhunjaaano braahmano brahmanamsorushet, Tadannamayajan bhuktvaa Gayatrashtakam japet/ Uddhrutyaa vaama hastena trishaaratah salilam pibet, Vaamenaivapibettoyam bhojaner paatramatayajan Tyajan pibettu rudhraham atyagamnamritam pibet/(It is forbidden to be seated on a bed, keep food on it and eat; do not make sounds while eating; never eat with anger nor while frightening children; do not eat in the presence of dogs and low class persons. Do not eat amid persons not eating or gazing at those as they eat. Do reject food at late timings and also that food which is not offered in ‘naivedya’ to Bhagavan. Once having realised that a glass of water in which already somebody drank in it is provided to a person, then that patra be replaced but not the bhojana. While in one pakti or a lane of eaters, one brahmana should not touch a co brahmana and having done so perform Gayari hundred and eight times but need not reject the bhojana already served. In the course of a bhojana, drink water with left hand without leaving the patra; it is stated that so drinking without leaving the patra in one go is like drinking ‘amrita’ but other wise it is
like drinking blood!) Vyasa Maharshi cautions as follows: *Shleshma bhrumhvachani kotsargo na annakale prashasyate, Bali maangalya japyaadou na home na mahaajane/ ( Acts like heavy coughing, loud cleaning or gargling of throat with ‘sheshma’, loud yawning are forbidden and uncivil at public eatings, japa homa groups and in the midst of congregations). Referring to ‘Bhakshya-abhakshya’ or material worthy of consumption or otherwise, Aparaarka detailed as follows: *Jaati dushtam kriyardushtam kaalaashraya vudushitam, Samsargaashraya dushtam vaa sahrullekham svabhaavatah/ Lashunam grunjanam chiva phalaamu kavakaadicha, Vaartaka nalikaa laabu hyave yaajnaati dushtam/ Nabhapakshyakriya dushtam yaddushtam patitaabhii, Kaala dushtam tu vigjayem asnaaahaktam chimrasthitam, Dadhi bhaksha vikaarascha madhu varjam tadishyate/Suraalashuna sansprushatam peeyushaadhi samanvitam, Samsargaadhdhushya -tetadddhi shudrochshthavadaaacarety/ Vichiktsaasu hridaye yasminnaanne pajaayate, Sahullekham tu vigjneyem peeyushaadhi svabhaavatah/ (It is always advisable to discard any thing or anybody which is spoilt by way of the background of Jaati or nativity, kriya or action or samsarga or association. Material worthy of discarding due to ‘jaati’ are among onions, lassan, brinjal etc. Whatever is procured or cooked by the characterless and conductless men or women who suffer from ‘kriya dosha’ too are worthy of discard. Another variety of material that suffer from ‘Kaala dosha’ or invalidated by time like old curd, milk and vegetables etc. too must be rejected for use. Yet another category suffering from ‘Samsarga dosha’ or wrong association and interaction with persons of fallen sections of the Society should be dispensed with instantly. Should there be any prick of conscience, food or related material be rejected.)

Parashara Maharshi prescribes atonement for the consumption of questionable food items: *Piyusham shveta lashuna vrinntaka phalagrinjanam, Phalaandu vrksha niryaasa Devasya kavakaanicha/ Ushtri ksheeramvksheera magjnaad bhunjate dvijah, Triruataramupavasaasena panchagavyena shudhyati/ Shveta shabdah lashina vrinntakaabhyam sambadhyyate tena, Krishna vaartaa ka raktalashunaadaa nedam vratamityuktam/ (Consumption of peeyusha or beaten cheese of cow milk after delivery, white onion called ‘lasun’, hing or asafetida, round brinjal, clove, camel milk or sheep milk, and such unworthy material calls the atonement or ‘prayaschitta’ by way of fastings of three nights and ‘pancha gavya sevana’ or eating the mix of five cow products of milk- curd- ghee-dung and urine. However, black brinjal and red lasan are exceptional for consumption) Manu Smriti prohibits the consumption of the following: *Shuktaanihi dvijonnaaninabhumjeeta kadahana, prakshaalitaani nirdoshaanya apaddhamaayadaa bhavet/ Veeryahaaniriyashaanaah pragnaa haanisthadhavache bhavettasmaattato raatrav dhaatreem jatnena varjyate/ Dhaanaa svadennacha divaa dadhisaktomstathaa nishi, Sarvaamcha tila sambandham naadayaatamayam pratii/ Tiktaadraka dadhisthou aai tilashaakaani nishyadan, Tyajyate rupavan–chreebhii pushpita stree rataadyathaa/ Sakaamsyam naarikelaambu kaimgyeha rasamaiksghavam, Taamra paatra yutam gavyam ksheeram cha lavanaaanvitam/ Ghritam lavana samuyakta Suraakalpam vivarjayet, Praktyaksha lavanam naadyaat pakvam para grihaagatam/ (Stored and sour of cooked rice should not be consumed by dvijas unless as ‘aapaddharma’ or the very last resort. Dhaatri or Amla fruit products be certainly avoided in the nights as there is a risk of losing masculinity, name and fame. Dhaanaa or Coriander seeds, curds in the nights and frequent fried items are avoidable. Ginger, curd, and tilas are forbidden to women in menstruation periods as the are likely to affect brightness, speech and prosperity. Coconut water in bronze utensils, sugarcane juice in copper and salted milk or ghee act as high intoxicants. Eating salt alone without dissolving with other items affects the body organs. Similarly cooked items from others are avoidable) Vyasa describes the bhojana niyamas
Asati Tulasi chaiva Dhatri phala mathaachytam, Yasodare pravartante tasya sannihito Harih/
Bhakshyam bhojyamcha lehyamcha Namo Narayanaya, Abhimaantra sprushan bhuntey sa yaati
paraamaamgatim/Yatipaatram yati naaproshitam chayat, Annaatreya nabhoktavyam
bhuvakaa chaandrayaanyam charat/ Apaliptasya murkhasya dushra vrittasya durmateh,
Annamashraddhaanasyobhunkte bhruha haasvai/Tyajedanupaneetannamandhasya patitasycha,
Vedaadhyayana heensaya kanyaa vikrayinasthataah/ Daridrasyacha murkhasya yati nindaa parasyacha,
Ayaajyam yaajaksyaanyam nmrdayaadasya karshinah/ Devadroha parasyaaman tathaa vigjana
dooshinah, Dagdhaanga syayasaair divyaih soma vikrayinasthataah/ (He who has in his belly the ‘Asati’
or a typical sweet cake of rice flour, tulasi leaves and dhaatri or amla is stated to be near and dear to Shri
Hari. He who does ‘abhimantra’ with ‘Namo Narayanaya’ to the ‘bhaks-
hyam-bhojya-lehyam’ varieties of
food as offering toVishnu and then consumes along with co-
devotees is destined to attain ‘parama gati’. In the event of robbing the exclusive food kept for a Sanyasi, preserved by him to eat and ready for his
prokshana before consumption, then the thief would have no remission at all except by undergoing
chandrayana vrata. If the food meant for a handicapped, foolish, below average, and careless person is
robbed then he is stated to have committed ‘bhruha hatya’ or killing an embryo! One should never
consume the food offered by one who has no yagnopaveeta, a blind one, a characterless person, one who
does not practise Vedaadhyayana, a dealer of brides, a poverty stricken one, a below par intelligent, a
critic of the holymen, one who performs evil- oriented agni karyas, a critic of the learned and a dealer of
intoxicant liquors and one with an iron-burnt body parts. Bharadvaaja and Parashara expressed views of
an act of omission and of commission each as follows respectively: Niraacharasaya viprasya
nishiddhaacharanasya cha, Annam bhuktvaa dvijah kuryaaadhi namekama bhojanam/- Sadacharasya
viprasya tathaa Vedantavedinah, bhuktvaannam muchyate paadahoraatra antaraan narah/ (In case a
learned dvija consumes food served by a faithless vipra of least principles and scruples, then the dvija
should better forgo a daily meal. On the other hand, if a dvija enjoys the food from a principled vipra then
even overnight the former is rid of the burden of his own sins!) Vishnu Maharshi stipulates that
whoseover of dvijas accepts and eats Paarvana shraddha bhojana has to execute six pranayamas, recites
Gayatri Mantra ten times and consumes water ten times too as also perform sandhyopaasana in the
evening when only he assumes ‘Shuddhatva’ or purity of body and mind. Another important regulation of
bhojana is prescribed byVyasa in connection with Solar and Lunar Eclipses: Suryagrahetu naashneeyaat
purvam Yaama chatushtayam, Chandragraham triyaamaan stree baala vridhhaatarairvinaa/Grastodaye
vidhoh purvam naaharbhohjana maacharet, Grastodite tathaa Suryena raatraw bhojanaam charat/
Samvatsaryaakamapi charat kruccham dvijottamaah, Agnata bhukta shudhvarthag jynaatasyatu
visheshata/ (With the exception of the aged, women and children, dvijas must follow the principle of ‘no
food’ during the four yaamas preceding the solar eclipse and three yaamas before Chandra grahana. The
general principle is that the day before Chandra grahana and the night before the Suryagrahana, bhojana is
avoided. To purify one’s body and mind, the blemish of bhojana knowingly or other wise, it is better that
one kruccha vrata is performed annually in any case!)

After bhojana, the conclusion would be: Amritaapidhaana maseetya vashipya jalam pibet, tachesham
rouravetyuktvaal baliprante visarjayet/ (After saying ‘Amritaapidhaanamasi’ and then drink up the
remainder water in the drinking vessel and continue reciting the Rourave mantra that follows, while
leaving water drops at the ‘bali sthaana’ keeping some morsels for the negligible praanis like ants and flies) Rouravepunya nilaye padmaarbudani vaasinaam, Ardhinaamudakam dartam akshayyamupatishtthi/
(The mantra means: may these water drops be plentiful to relieve the tortures being experienced by the padmaaruba nivasis of rourava naraka) Apasrutiya tatata paschaan gunushaan shodashaacharet, Viprasya dakshine bhaage Devaastishthani yatnatah, Aaseena eva gundushaan vaamabhage visarjayet/ (Now, clean the mouth gargling sixteen times and throw out the mouth water to the left as Deva ganas would be present to the right side of the vipra.) Gautama Muni states: Aaachantah punaarachaamedayam Gow ritimantratah, Dripadaam vaa triravaartya sarvapaapa pranaashineem, Hastou nidhruti angushthaabhyaaam aknorambu vinikshipet/ Sharvaatim cha Sukanyaam cha Chyavanam shakramashvinou, Bhukta maatram smaredyastu chakshstasya naheeyate/ (Then, perform ‘achamana’ thrice with the drupada mantra or that of ‘Ayam gouh’ and with raised hands press the eyes and the right thumb with water; this act would help improve vision by the grace of Sharvaati, Sukanya, Chyavana, Indra and Ashvini Devatas) Vyasa desires that after the bhojana prakriya, the Vipra should take up ‘adhyayana’ of Itihasa Purana Vedas to enable proper digestion of food consumed: Bhuktaavai sukhamaasthaaya tadannam parinaamayet, Itihasa puraaakahyaam Vedardhaanupah brumhayet/ Shankha Muni warns as follows: Divaa svaapam na kurveeta gacchennaiva divaastriyam, Aayuh khayakari nidraadivaa stree punya naashani, Vridhaa vividha vaakyaaami parivaadaashcha varjyayet/ (None should neither sleep nor have a woman as daytime sleep reduces longevity and physical contact of a woman destroys punya and lead to avoidable problems) Supugam cha supatramcha churnena cha samanvitam, Pradadyaaadviya varyehiyya taamboolam charvayedbudha/ Aayuh pragnyaabalam buddheeretah shaktirvinashyati, Jihvaa rasam na grhuatii sadaa taambulacharvanam/ (After the bhojana, one should offer ‘taambula’ or betel leaves and betel nuts to those having the bhojana including the self as tambula provides satisfaction, but repetitive tambula bhakshana destroys mental alertness, physical strength and self-confidence.) After bhojana and adhyayana, Daksha prescribes: Itihasa puranaabhyaan shastha saptamakou nayet, Ashtame lokayaatraatu bahissandhtaam tatah param/ (After the sixth to eighth ghadis, Sandhya vandana folows) Hutvaagnim vidhi vanmantraih bhuktvaa yagjnaavashishtakam, Sabhrutyu bandhavajanah svapechushka padonishi/ (Vyasa states that as prescribed the dvija should perform homa karyas and the remainder bhojana be enjoyed along with his family and followers.) Bodhayana compares the punya of performing ‘Sayamkaala Agni’: Merukanchana daanaani vaajapeya shtaanicha,Kanyaa koti pradaanam cha samam saatsaayamaahuteh/(The Agni karya performed in the evenings is as effective as Meru kaanchana daana, vaajapeya yagnya shata phala, and koti kanya daana) Nishaayaam prathame yaame japa yaginaarcjhanaadikam, Svaaayayaa bhoojanaam praktaah varjyitvaa mahaanisham/ (Shaunaka Muni prescribes that the first ‘yaama’ of the night be spent with japa, yagnya, Archana, Svaddhyaya and bhoojana, leaving midnight free.) GargyaMuni describes: Sukhaanukule shayane vaama paarshvena samvishet, Aayuhvaamaakar proktam uttanam balavardhanam/ (One might comfortably sleep as per convenience on the left side of the bed; a slightly raised head with left hand gives long life and stamina. Sleeping in one’s own house is eastward faced, in the house of in-laws as southward and elsewhere west ward but never on the northern side) As about to sleep, Ratnaavali states: Raatri suktam japet smritvaa sarvaamscha sukha shaayinah, namaskrituyaayam Vishnum samaadhisthaah svapenishi/ (While sleeping, one would do well reciting Raatri Sukta and greeting Lord Vishnu sincerely, sleep off still till early traces of Stars on the Skies.) Manu provides the advice: Rituka laabhigaameesyat svadaara nirattassadad, Parvam varjyaa vrajecchaanaam annuto ratikamyaya/ (A dvija as also all males of dharma ought be contented as ‘Svabharya niratas’ or be faithful to one’s own wives; on ‘parva dinas’ and during the periods, they too be excused but none else indeed, in any case).
Shouchaashoucha prakarana:

Daanam pratigrahohomam svaadhyayayah pitru karmacha. Preta pindakriyaav varjamaasiuchhe vinivartayet/ (Shankha Maharshi emphasises that the deeds of virtue like giving and accepting charities, homa karmas, svaadhyaya, Pitru karma, and preta pinda kriyas should not be executed during ‘Ashuchi’) Nimittam pindadaamaad uphepurushasthamashuddhi krit, Kaalasnaanaapanodyah yathhad aashoucha miteeryayet/ (Ashuchi is defined as purifies the body and Soul by way of snaanaas arising out of situations and acts applicable to Dvijas) Upaasane cha Vipraanaam angashuddhistu jaayate, Brahmachari grihe yshaam huyate cha huashaanah, Samparkam chenna kurvanti nateshaam sutakam bhavet/ (Vipras attain physical purity by constant meditation. There would be immunity in those households where brahmacharis perform homas with faith) Sutake mritakechaiva Sandhyaakarma samaarcharet, Manasocchhaaarayet mantraan praanaayaamaadrateh/ (Sandhyopaasana needs to be performed both during ‘Jaatashaoucha’ or ‘Mritaashaoucha’ or Ashuddhi on account of births or deaths, by maanaso-cchaarana or recitation of mantras mentally without resorting to pranaayama, confirms Pulastya Maharshi) Vyaasa too states: Prakshipet sutaket arghyam Gayatreem samuccharan, Datavaa pradakshi-nam kuryaat Suryam dhyayaayet dvijottaaamah, Dasha krutastu Gayatreem manasaiva Shuchih smaret/ (During Jataaashaoucha too, a Dvija could recite Gayatri and perform by way of Surya dhyana pradashinivas. During the ten days of Ashuchi, Gayatri be recited by one’s own mind) Manu instructs: Ubhayatra dahaahani kulasyaannam na bhujyate, Daanam prati griho homah svaadhyaya yascha nishiddhate/ Ashouchetu dashaahaantam na kuryaad devtarachanam, Na kuryaatpitru kaaryaani daanam homam japam tathaa/ (In both the kinds of Ashuchi due to births and deaths, daana-pratigriha-homa-svaadhyaya karyas are forbidden for ten days; also during the ten days of Ashoucha, Devatar-chana-Pitru kaarya-daana-homa-japas are forbidden too.) Kanva Maharshi states: Agnihotra havbam kuryaad anyaahave svayam dvijah, kuryaat snaatvaaadraavaasaaastu tasmaatkaalaasa- drute ashuchih/ (If alone, a dvija needs to perform Agnihotra homa by himself, after taking bath with wet clothes, but at the required time for the homa, lest he would get ashuchi.) Sutake mritakechaiva ashtakou shaadha bhojane, pravaasaadi nimitteshu haavayenmuttu haapayet/ (Brihaspati instructs that during Ashuchi either on account of births or deaths or in the situations when shraddha karmas are not possible to perform or when away from one’s home then homa karyas may not be done by the self but by a proxy) Shouchaamanam snaanam niyamam bhojanaadishu, Asprushya sparshane snaanam kuryaadashouchavaan dvijah/ Dravyaami Swaami sambandhaatam na kuryaaddevataarchanam, Swaami shuddhyava shuddhyanti vaarinaa prokshitaanyapi/ (If any shoucha dvija touches an ‘Asprushya’ or untouchable or vice versa, then the dvija has to perform snaana and change of clothing. All the material related to Deva Vigrahas are indeed subject to ‘Ashuchi’ but with ‘prokshana’ or sprinkling of water, the material would be purified. However the dvija is preferably required to carry the Puja material himself on securing the approval of the Devata such as curd, milk, salt, flowers, tila, honey, well water, and mriga charma.) Paraashara lists out auspicious contexts to give away charities: Khale yagne vivaahecha sankraante grahanemritou, Putre jaate vyatipaate dattam bhavatichaakshhayam, Sharvaryaam daanamasteeti naanyatra tu vidheeyate/ (Charities at yagnyas, weddings, sankramanas, eclipses, deaths and births or graha yogas bestow far reaching fruits, even if such charities are made on the nights, but on other occasions night charities are forbidden).
Sadyassoucha: Sadyasshoucham tathaikaah traighaschaturahastathaah, shat dasha dvaadashaah pakshaascha dasha sutake/ (Daksha prescribes ‘sadyassoucha’ for a day or three days, four, six, ten, twelve or fifteen days) Yagnyavalkya defines ‘sadyasshoucha’ vidhi to Ritvijas or those in deeksha or vrataas, brahmacharis, donors, or those involved in daana- vivaaha-yagna-yuddha or great risks) Naishthikaanaam vanasthaanaam yateenam brahmcharinaam, naashoucham sutake proktam shaavevaaputitathauvacha/(Brighaspati exempts from Ashoucha to naishthikas or those in deeksha, vanaprasthaas, sanyarias, brahmacharis even in their deaths.) Kruccha devotsava shraaddha daana homa tapodvare, prarabdhe tat pravrittanaam sadyasshoucha madhaagame/ (Sadyassoucha is applicable to those engaged in the course of Kruccha vrataas, Devotsavas, Shraaddha- daana- homa-tapas-yagna karmanas as these are in progress, as quoted from Sangraha Grandha) Aarambhe varanam yagne Sankalpo vratasatrayoh, Naandimukham vivaahaadou shraaddhepaakakriyaa- statdha/ Niyantarateshu vipreshu prarabdhe shraaddha karmani Paakaarambhaataa param kartrun daatrune bhoaktun na sprashyade/ (Smrityardha saara saara explains that one should not touch those engaged in the varana at the beginning of yagnas, Vrata Satras, Sankalpas aVivahas, Naandi mukhas, shraaddhas, paaka kriyas, or to those organising these acts, karya karts, karya daatatas and bhooktas) Bodhayana Maharshi states: Pranava vyahritis purvakam Veadadimaarabhya satatatmadheeyaat, naantaraa viramet vyaharedvaa naanyantaraa janana maranaashoucham/ (Once Vedadhyyayana commencing from Pranava vyahritis is on, then this ‘adhhyayana’ should not be interrupted in between and ‘ashoucha’ if any is not applicable in that situation.) Udvaahaka kuraa aarabhde maatraapitormriti yadi, Tatkaale sakalam kritvaa shesha hom,a, samaacharet/ Vivaaha sheha madhvetu dampatyormaranam yadi, Karma shesham tathah kritvaa pashchhaaddhanamaacharet/ Smrityantarastas that one ankuraarpana is performed and one ofthe parents is no more, then too the sheha homa be completed first; similar would be the case that during the course of the weddings too, the karma shesha be fulfilled first and then attend to the duties next! Bhunjaaneshu tu vipreshu hyantaraamrita sutake,Anyagehodakaa chaantaa ssarvete huchayah smritah/ (Shattrimshanmate states: Even while Vipras are taking food, they obtain the Ashuchi then they could secure water from else’s house and perform ‘Achaanta’ to get them purified) Vishnu Purana warns: Udaykaasutikaa shuchi mritahaaraischa veekshite, Shraaddhe Suraana pitaro bhunjate purusharshabha/ (As shraddha karma is in progress, if a Rajasvala, a mother with days long child or persons carrying a dead body enter the scene, even Devas and Pitr Devas refuse to accept the offerings) Parashara Muni confirms: Bhruyagvni manare chaiva deshaantaramrite tathaa, Baaleprete cha sanyaste sadyasshoucham vidheeyate/ (Sadyassoucha sutra is followed in case there might be a death on account of fire, or in a foreign land or of a child or sanyasi) Sadyassynaana is also performed on the death of father- mother in laws, Ritvijas, Teacher or enemies; the same is also applicable to those who die in national calamities, thunder strikes and battles. Paraashara Smriti also states: Baale deshanantarasthe cha patite cha yatou mrite, sadyasshouchanam tathecchato jalaagnyuubdandhanaadishu/ Sadyasshouchana be also prescribed in connection with deaths of children, deshantara vaasis, patitas, yatis and of fire accidents and suicides) Vyasa Muni prescribes: Ye mritaah paapamargena tesham samvatsaraatparam Narayana balim krutvaa kuryaadordhva kriyaa dvijah/ Tatra triraatramaahsouchham dviteeyavasthisanchanan, triteeyetooda – kam datvaa chaturdhe shraadha maacharet/ (When a dvija ends up in a ‘durmarana’ in an unnatural manner of death, then ‘Narayana Bali’ be performed followed by ‘urtvaa kriyas’; the Ashoucha would be for three days, as the second day would be for ‘asti sanchayana’, third day to offer ‘Udaka’ and fourth day of ‘shraaddha’). Angira Maharshi too suggests the same procedure of Narayana Bali in the cases of ‘durmarana’ or suicides and either after three months, or six months or a year later, the Karta requires to
perform Praajaapatya vratas like Kuccha or Taptu krucca or chandrayana vratas and Narayana Bali. Paraashara prescribes a few Nimitta Shouchas: ‘Garbha sraava’ sutaka would be for as many days as the month of the incident: the garbha sraava is upto four months, five and six months to be considered as ‘Patana’ or fall of the garbha and thereafter ‘prasuti’; the ‘sutaka’ is upto ten days. In case the Garbha sraava is upto three months, then the Ashoucha is for three months for the mother and snana for the father. Navama maasamaarabhya prasaava nimitta dashaaahaadi sutakam, Sarva sapindaanaama sheshena bhavati ttriahi prasavo mukhyah/ (Dashaka grandha clarifies that the Ashucli would be applicable to all the ‘Sapindas’ or what colloquially stated as ‘Jnaatas’) In this connection, the Sangraha Grandha explains in great detail: Kanyakaaajanane bhraatru pitru tadbhraatru tatsutah, Pitaamahaschatadbhraatashuddha -nti dashaa raatratah/ Pumsi jaate sapindaanaama striyam pitroh pituh pituh, Sodaraamaam pitruvyaa - naam tatsutaanaamagham bhavet/ Jananaashoucham dvividham, Asprushyatva lakshanam, Dharmaa nadhikaaraa lakshanam cheti, tatra asprushyatva lakshanam naasi kintu dharmaanadhikaaraa lakshana meva/ Janou sapindaasshuchayah maataaa pitropi sutakam, Sutakam maatureva syaadupaspru -sya pitaashuchih, nirastu pumaan shuklamuprasrushiyaava shudhyati/ Vritssvaadhyaya aaapekshamagha sankochanam tathaa, asprushyatvaadi hetubhum samtaashuchayah Daana dharmaanadhikaaraa lakshanantu putrajane, vinshataa tataa paryantam stre shaveaanaa seeaaparyateamaeveva/ (As a baby girl is born, Sutaka shuddhi is attained after ten nights to brothers of the baby, father, his brothers and their sons, paternal grand father and his brothers. In the event of arrival of a boy, all the Sapindas, maternal grand father, father’s brothers and their children would attract Sutaka. ‘Jananaashoucha’ is of two kinds viz. ‘Asprushyata lakshana’ and ‘dharmaanadhikaara’ lakshana: in the even of a birth, mother has asprushyata lakshana or forbidden of touch but father is free after bath but suffers from dharma anadhi -kaara. As the birth takes place, the ‘sapindas’ remain unaffected but the parents have ‘sutaka’although the father is freed after Shuddhi snana. In case the father touches the mother then only he gets affected which gets back ‘shuchitva’ after bath or even by the touch of silver. In any case the cause of this ‘aprushyata’ is for ten days, although the ‘daana dharma adhikara’ or the right to perform dharmika duties gets revived after twenty nights if a boy is born or after a month if a baby is born.) There are a few more do’s and don’ts in the context of ‘ashuchi’: one dvija is forbidden to touch during ashuchi with another dvija in a similar situation. In the event of death of a boy within ten days of his life, his relatives are unaffected but the father retains sutaka for ten days. If the boy passes away till he gets his teeth then only then ashuchiyata be observed, till his choula ceremony then one night’s asuchi be observed; till upanayana samasaka three nights and ten nights thereafter. Karma Pradipika states that if a boy or girl of less than three years dies, then khanana samskaara or ‘bhu sthapana’ be done and one day’s fasting be observed. Madhaviya however states: Anateetadvivarshastu preto yatraapi dahyate, ashoucham brachhmanaantu tritram tatra vidhyate/( If a two year child dies then ‘Agni dahana’ in the normal course and three days of ashuchi be observed.) In case of death of a three years, then udaka-pinda daana be done as also three day of ashoucha. Shastha varshaadaarabhya upanayana paryante karchividhinaa sanskri- tya tilodaka pinda daana nava shraddhaa, shodasha shraddhadhaani mantravariyam tantratra yevakuryaat/ Upanayananta pitruvedhaa vidhinaa sanskritya mantravat kuryaat/ (From the sixth year to upanayana, the procedure would be by the ‘Ekarcha vidhi samaskaara’ with tilodaka, pinda daana, nava shraddha, shodasha shraddha but without mantra but with tantra. After upanayana, the procedure is of ‘pitru vedha’ and also of mantra purvvaaka vidhana. Kanyaa balakumaareenam tryaham pindokaka kriyaah, Kuryaad dashaahamaashoucham vartate naatra samshayah/ Takthaa baalasaya kanyayaasshandasya pattisasya cha, Narayana baliik kaaryahyaveshshaam mokshakaankshinaam/(To Kanyas and baala kumarais on
death, pindodaka kriya is to be executed on the third day and ashoucha is prescribed for ten days. But in respect of boys, virgins and vagabonds, Narayana bali is required to be performed.) Apastamba says that when a girl dies even before the hair at the time of birth is intact, then Sadyah shoucha is prescribed and otherwise the ashoucha would be for three days. Once married the ashouchau is for three days and so would be if she had menses. If kanya daana is done and the girl delivers or dies in her father’s house then the parents get Shuddhi after three days, says Vyasa Muni. Paraashamba Muni refers to a boy whose upanayana had been performed dies then the dispensation would be as follows: Ekaahyaat shuddhyate viproyo Agni Veda saanvitat, tryaat kevala Vedastu, nirguno dashabhirdinaih/ Janmakarma pari - bhrashtah Sandhyopaasana varijith, Nama dharak Viprastu dashaaham sutaake bhavet/ (A vipra who observes Agni Karya and sandhya vandana daily should regain ‘shuddatva’ within a day, while he who knows Vedas should observe the same for three days but he who who is a Brahmana only by birth has to observe Ashuddhi for the full ten days; similarly a ‘karma bhrashtha’ vipra who does not even perform Sandhya vananada has necessarily to perform the ‘ashutva’ for full ten days as per established practice.)

As regards ‘dutta putra shoucha’, the family from whose father the adopted child takes place is not eligible to the gotra, property and other features while that into which the adopted child goes becomes eligible to the gotra , property and so on., as Manu instructs. Similarly all the shoutra, smaarta duties too get transferred. At the same time, Smrityantara clarifies: Yadyamaantardashaa hyesyaaouraso dattha - krittimo, pindodakam dashaahnedadhyranyetvamaa tithoua/ Maataapitroh kriyaa uryaadouraso yadiputrakah, kulaantara pravishthaanaam ashoucham tryahamevatu/ (The ‘pindodaka kriyas’ of both the natural father and the adopted one, be duly performed even Amavasya occurs in between. This is applicable to both the parents. In case however, the adopted son goes to a new ‘kula’ or caste, then the ashuchi due to the death of the natural father would only be for three days.) Janayituh putra portraa praputraabhaave datta euaad aahikam, Sarvam kriitvaa pratyabikam tanmritaahhe paarvanam kuryaat/ (As the adopted father dies, the Datta Putra and later his progeny should perform all the ‘Dashahanaadi’ duties and the annual duties) However, as a rule, the elder son of any father should not be given away in ‘duttata’ or adoption: Na jyeshtham putram dadyaat pratigrihni yaadvaa/ Also, if the adopted son begets a son further, then the original grand father or family being of a different gotra has no ‘ashoucha’ but a formal snaana would purify.) As regards ‘Tri Raatraashoucha’ or ‘ashuchi’ for three nights, Brihaspati stipulates: Tryaham maataa mahaar aacharya gotriyeshva shuchirbhavet, maattrupa saamaatulayoh shvashu shvashurayor gurau mrite chartviji yaaaye chatri raatrena vishudhyati/ (Death of maternal grandfather, one’s own guru and sva-gotreeyas would have ‘ashuchi’ for three day-nights). Angira Muni provided details: ‘Triraatraashoucha’ is applicable to maternal grand parents, maternal uncle / his wife, father- in- law, mother-in-law, paternal brother and sister, mother’s sisters and their sons, daughter and children. Pakshini Ashuchi or for a day and half is applicable for the following: Mother’s sister’s daughter and son; father’s sister’s children; niece; father’s sister’s children etc. However Pakshini is not applicable to births in one’s family. More over, pakshini vidhi which is applicable in the case of wives is not applicable to the husbands such as her father’s brothers and their children; her father’s sisters and son. Aneka-ashoucha krama: Antaraatu dashaahnasya punarwarana janmani, Taavatryaad ashuchirviproyaa - vattsyaadanirdasham/(Paraashara Maharshi instructs that during the ‘dashaah’ or the ten day long period of ashuchi, if there occurs another birth or death, then from that day onward, a vipra needs to observe ashuch for further ten days.) Angira Muni however states thay this procedure is applicable only to deaths occuring during the period and not to births; that is: mritaashucha and not sutakaashucha. He states further: Svalpaashouchasya madhyetu deerghashoucham bhavedyadi, tatpurvena visshuddhisyaat
svakaakaalenaiva shuddhyati (/ In case a long duration spell of Ashoucha is to happen along side a shorter spell, then there would be shuddhi or relief from the shorter duration ashuchi and the longer spell of ashuchi would take its course) Vyasa mentions of further dimension of ashoucha within another ashoucha: Triratra mrita madhyetu dashaaham jaataka bhavet, Mritaashochena shuddisyadityyaah Bhagava Yamah/(Assuming that a ten night long jaataashoucha during the course of a three night mritaashoucha, then Yama Raja is quoted by Vyaasa saying that the vipra concerned would be freed from the mritaashoucha) Manu also stated: Atikrante dashaahetu tritaamashichirbhavet, Samvatsare vyateetetu sprushtaivaapovishudyati / ( As one becomes aware of a death of sagotra after ten days, then instead of ten days, one needs to observe Ashuchi for three Triratras) Vashishtha states: Masatraye triraatram syat shanmaase pakshni tathaah, Ahaatu navamaadaraavak urthvam snaanato shuddyati/(As the intimation of death reaches late then theVipra needs to observe ‘tri-ratras’ after three months, pakshini after six months, one day after at the delayed intimation of over a year, and therefter by a shuddi snaana!)

Shraaddha Dharma Prakarana

Asaamardhyaccharirasya Vaishamyaaddeshes kalayoh, Snaanantyetaani tulyaa nimantraani yadhaa - balam/(Yagnyavalkya states that in the evolution of time when human beings gradually dwindle in their body strength and resistance, even ‘mantra japa snaanas’ as per one’s own capacity are indeed ideal) He further says that when they display Urdhwapundras or wear bhasma rudraakshas, ultimately they have to reach the destination by air anyway at the end! Tulasidala samnishram api sarshama maatakam, Gangaajalam punaateva kulanaamekavimshati/( One tulasi leaf with a drop of Ganges water with faith could bestow salvation to twenty one generations!) Vyaadhivyasanani nishraante durbhikshe daamare tathaah, Upavasaoavrata homah dvijaissampaaditaaniva/ Brahmaanaa jangamam teertham teertha bhutas shuddhyanti malinaa janaah/ Brahmanaa yani bhaashante manyantetaani Devataah, Sarva Veda mayo Vipro na tadvachana manyathaah/ Yo mrityu kaale samprapte gaam dadaati payasvineem, Gavaadarshita maarga Brahma lokam maheeyate/ Sangjnyaa –haanou marananepi sannihitah dadyaaditi, Vyaasah : Aaturovaadha putrovaa dadyu - raasanna bandghavaah/Maha paataakayuktovaa sarva paataakah, Parampadam prayaatveva mahadh- bhiravalokithaah/ Yathaah kathamchit Govinde keertiteevaa shrupovaa, Paapinopi vishuddhassuh shuddhaa mokshavip- nuyah/ Shiva Shiva Shiva cheti vyaharavanvai trivaaram tyaji iha tanuh, yasyaarunyontyakshane- smin bhavati bhava bhayaanaaa, Chhedakah purva shabdo na bhavata itaroudvou kalpitaayopakarou/(Parashara Muni explains the Munursha prayashchitta vidhi as follows: As dvijas are subjected by the Adhi daivika- adhi bhouita- adhyaatmika difficulties, then only upavaasas, vratas and homa karyas set to Daamara Shiva Tantra are the singular refuge points. Indeed the steps taken by Brahmanas and Jangamas are the unique Tirtha Places and their auspicious expressions are such as to purify the great sins of the ordinary classes of the Society instantly. The words of Brahmanas are such that Devatas pay attention to respectfully. Similarly, Vipras are Sarva Vedamayaas and their expressions would never fail! As one approaches death, charity of a milk yielding cow leads to Brahma Loka.

Parashara further quotes Vyasa Muni assuring that as a person’s death is round the corner unable to recognise, then go daana on behalf of the person would go a long way and as the charity is given away even a sinner of magnitude would jump the ways towards Paramapada. Some how if the dying person is enabled to sing in praise of Govinda or atleast hear the hymn would most positively purify his heart and soul. Pronounciation of Shiva-Shiva- Shiva shabdas thrice over should destroy the fears of death and serve as the pointer to Moksha!) Vishnu Maharshi desires that the sons and relatives ought to whisper into the
person’s right ear of Punya Sukta and Mantraksharaas as they realise of risk of life. Vaishtha strongly advises: Piturmarana kaaletu runamochanaat, Mastakastu samaadaaya dakshinasayatu jaamuni/ Shraavayetpunya sultaani punya mantraaksharaani, tatastu nirgate vaayou kushaagreshu vinikshipet/(To secure ‘Pitru runamochana’ the sons should keep the father’s head on their right thighs and enable him to hear punyasuktas and after the praana vayu and breathing stops ticking then rest the body on darbhas!) This above indeed is the mumoorshu praayashchitta vidhi. Now, mumoorshoh daana vidhi as follows: Maha Bharata describes that the distance between Bhu loka to Yama loka is 86000 yojanas (13 km in one yojana) and in that loka is full of hot sand, thorny, with no water and shade. Pracheta Muni therefore prewarns that whatever daanas are given before one’s life or at its end could see through the way suitably and hence the significance of mumursha daana. Gobhutila hiranyaaiva vistaa daaanya gudaani cha, Roupyam lavana mityaahurdasha daanaani panditaah/Etaani dasha daanaani naranaammarituyu janmanoh, kuryaa dabhyudayaarham cha pretepi paratra cha/ Vidyyaa pravasato mitram, bhaaryaa mitram griye satah, Aturasya bhishak mitram daanam mitram maripyatayu/ (The dasha daanas to be made during one’s life time or at least at the end of life’s journey are the ten viz. cow, land, tila, gold, ghee, dhanya, jaggery, coins and salt to facilitate the post-death journey. Indeed, knowledge and education is the essential friend while abroad or elsewhere than one’s village or township; in one’s own household, wife is the best friend; a physician is the best friend in illness; above all daana karma is the saviour at the time of death!) Following is the Paryushita prayashchitta: A peson who dies before Brahmis Muhurta is called paryushita and to accord shuddhi, a prayashchitta is required to be performed. Gargya Muni states that ‘pretasamskara’ is required to be performed before twenty five ghadis of day time; if for any reason, the body is not disposed off, then that is called for ‘paryushita’ prayashchitta which includes krucca traya vrata and pancha gavya snaana of the body before ‘dahana karma’. Bodhaayana emphasises that in the event of death in nights, it is preferred to perform the next dahana next day. Smrityantaara states: Kumbha meena sthite chandre maranam yadi jaayate, mrityustu sadgati gacchet anyeshaam ashubkam bhavet/ (When Chandra is in kumbha-meena rashis, the one so dead would be blessed with ‘Sadgati’. Jamadagni prescribes: Pituh putrena kartavyaah pindadaanodaka kriyaah, Ashaktopyadagnudah putrah sheshghamanyassmaapayet/ (As pindadaanodaka kriyas as also Agni karyas are required to be executed by sons, but if unable, they might only perform the ‘dahana’ and the rest be deputed by a proxy). Smrityantaara states that Nava Shaaddha, Sapindatva, Sixteen Shraaddhas be preferably done by the same karta. Bhjina maatraukaanaam putraanaam samayave yojanmato, jyeshtha ssaayeva piruh kuryaat namaa - truto jyashthah, Sarvatra janma jyeshthasvavagrahanaaat/ (Even if there are different mothers, the eldest by birth only should perform the Pitru karya.) Manu states: Vananam daha - nam vaapi pretasya nyasya garbhvaan, Na kuryaadu bhayam tatrakuryaaede pitussadaah/ ( A person whose wife is in a family way should not perform dahana kriya to any body else except to his own father) Jyeshthasya chaanapatyasya maatulasyaa sutasyacha/ ( A person could perform dahana kriya to his elder brother without sons or a maternal uncle without sons) Bhrigu Maharshi states: Ashaktastu daahamaa -tram mantravadeva kuryaat anyatsarvam, Pratyasaanmena kartaanetra darbha pradaana anujnayayaa kaarayet/ Deekshatopyeka putraschenmaataapitormriti yadi, darbha Samskrutjaahalaamaagaatyaa yagina sheshham samaapayet/ (If a person is unable to perform the Pitru/ Maatru Karma might execute the dahana with mantras formally and authorise a proxy by giving darbha pradaana while being in his presence. Even if during a vrata deeksha, if a person’s mother or father dies, the deeksha be set aside for the being and resumed as he is freed from the duty to re-enter the ‘Yagnya -shaala’). Marichi Muni describes the approved practices of the following: Putraha poutrascha taajascha putrikaa putra evacha, Patni bhraataaa cha taajascha
pitaamaahaa snushaa tathaa, Bhagini bhaagineya scha sapindo dhanaha - aryapi purvam purvam vinaashhesyu rutratotara pinaddaah/ (In the absence of son, grandson, great grandson, daughter’s son, brother in law ie. wife’s brother, his son, father, mother, daughter in law, sister, nephew and so on, then the relevant further generations are required to provide ‘pindapadaana’)

Pitra douhitravolloke visheshonaasti dharmatah, Douhitraakhilam aputrasya piturharet, Sayevapa - dadyaat dvou pindou pitre mataamahayaacha/ Dhanu grahamaa bhavepi douhito dhikaaari, Douhitra apeksha yaa patmuuh praadhamyamaahaa sangraha kaaraah/ Putrah kuryaat pituh shraaddhe patmicha tada sanni - dhou, Dhana haaryadhaa douhitrastato bhraataa cha tatsutah/ Aprajaa -yaam ateetaayaam bhartureva tadipyate, Patireva kriyaam kuryaadaputraayamrita striyaah/ (Manu further states that there is no difference in the douhitra or the relevant further generations of daughter’s parents. If even douhitra is not in place, then one’s own wife gets primacy as decided by sangraha karaka. It says: ‘In the absence of father, priority would be to a son, or the son’s wife in the absence of the son, or douhitra, or brother of the deceased or his son. If there are no children, the wife has to perform the or vice versa)

As regards the kind of Agni in which the body is to be consigned, it is said that in case the departed one was an ‘Ahitaagni’, then three Agnis be utilised; an ‘Anahitagni’ or that Vipra be consigned in ‘Aoupasaanaagni’ or Ekaagni, and others in ‘loukikagni’. Vasishtha states that in case wife dies earlier to husband, he should be consigned to Aoupasanaagni with ‘paitrumedhika samskara’. If wives outlive husbands, the relevant type is ‘Uttapanaagni’ and if the reverse happens then the ‘Agnisangraha’. Referring to Upaveeta niyama, one knows that Upaveeta is required to perform Praanayama, Namaskara, Snaana, Pradakshina, Pitru karya and Preta Karma. Bharadvaja states: Karmaavasaane karmaadou mritaa –vaamachanam punah kuryaat svakarma shuddhyardham sarvadaa sarvakarmasu, Tatobhyantara shuddhyardham praanaayaamaan samacharet/ Praacheenaaveetinaa karyam pretakarnachaa paitrukam, niveetino vaheystejaatinonyeche vaahakaah/ Aavaahane rghye sankalpe pindadaanee tilodake, Akshayaa sanayoh paadyye gotram naamacha keertayet/ (In connection with the karma after death, the Karta has to perform ‘aachama’ before and there after. To enable Siddhi or proper conclusion of the Karma, he would have to perform praanaayama. Either at a prteta karma or pitru karma, one has to wear the yanopaveeta in ‘praacheenaaveeti’ or reverse position, while the jnaata or near dear seeking to carry the body must were the Sacred Thread as a garland. As and when the acts of Aavahana, Argjiha, Sankaalpa, Pinda daana, Tilodaka, Akshshaya, Aasana and Paadya are to be taken up then it becomes incumbent to announce the gotra naamas of the Kartas)

Preta nirharana prakaara: Manu prescribes that the ‘preta’ or the body be shrouded by a new but torn cloth as Rigvedis follow but Yajurvedis cover with a new cloth in full. Pracheta Muni describes: Snaanam pretasya putraadaih vastraadyaih pujanantataha, Pretam dahet shubhairgandhascharchitaam sragva bhushitam/ (Sons or other intimate persons perform snaana, vastraadi puja and ‘alankaara’ with sandalwood paste and flower garlands) Vasishtha prescribes that a temporary wooden ladder made of aoudumara tree as adequately stringed to bear the weight of the body be arranged and the body be placed with the face looking to the sky and hands tied to with the head on the southern side; it should not be head reversed nor look back to the village or town) Vriddhaah pretasya puratahstriyo baalascha prishthatah, Atha kriittareeyaassyyuh pravimuktah shiriruhah, Gaccheyur baandhavaah paschaanaaanyeh pretasyachaantarad/ (The old, women and children should wear their ‘uttareeyas’ or the upper cloths hanging down and hairs untied as they should stay back and none should cross the ‘pretaagni’ being
carried by the karta.) ‘Pitrumethasaara’ stipulates the materials to precede the funeral procession to the burial ground and not to follow: Agnegnimadha samharaamastilas- tandulaam charum, Palaasha shaakhaam hirany shakalaanyaafyam patraani darbhaasma sikataascha prasthaapyaatha pretam haryurna graamaabhi mukham pretam nirhareyu/ (Even before the body and the pretagni leads the procession, the relevant material required for the funeral must precede separately well ahead of the arrival of the body and the material should include tila, raw rice, wooden pieces, palasha tree’s branch, gold, pearls, ghee, darbhas, stone, sand and so on.)

Dahana prakaara: Vyaghrapaada Maharshi instructs: Naadhomukham nanagnam cha daheranmala dushitam, Ayagneeya samidhascha chandaala patitaahritaih/Krimikeetaadi dushhaischina dahettu charantani, Vastram parityajedardhamb ardhantu paridharayet/(The body as kept on the pyre should not be kept reverse faced, naked, uncleaned and unbathed. The quality of wood utilised for the pyre should be worthy of use at Yagnya karyas, but not with wormed, spoilt and uncouth wood. The body be draped half naked and half covered) Apastamba Sutras stipulate: Athainam chitaavaavarparyadh puhadtyathaasya praanaayataneshu, Hiranyas shaakalaan prat tymayyat aayja bindunvaa/ (As the body is suitably arranged on the pyre, then gold, pearls and ghee drops be placed at the heart and nose.) Bodhayana suggests: Dadhyaaayja tila tandulaan pretasya aasyetu nikshipet/(At the mouth of the body be placed curd, ghee drops, black tilas, and rice) Vasishtha details: Agni ksheponaadhi shavah Shrutaavaahuti darshhanaa, Aahutyupari vikshepaattakarma viphalam bhavet/Srvata eva sahasaa prajvaalayet,Brahma lokamajaisheedityenam jaaneeyaaaditi/Vastram samshodhayedaadou tatah snaanamaacharet, Sachelastu punah snaatvaashichih pratyatamaanasah/ Anugamyamritam pretam jnaateenapyanusrutya cha, Snaatvaa ghritam cha bhakshitvaa punah snaanam samaacharet/ (Vedas emphasise that the body should not have ‘Aahuti darshana’ or the sight of Agni by the body, as that karma would become futile. At the same time the fire on the fire should at once be made to blaze as the preta should have the awareness that he or she would soon arrive at Brahma Loka! Having patiently waited till the Fire consumes the body fully, then the Karta should perform ‘sachela snaana’ or with the same clothes as the deed was performed and remain clean in body and mind. Those who accompany the body should take repeated baths to remove the ‘ashuchi’ of the body and consume ghee.)

Vapana Vidhi: Akrutvaa vaoanam mudhah preta karma pravartate, Udakam pinda daaanam cha shraadddham chaivahi nishphalam/Vapannam dhahanaaputraam kuryaacchetpitru ghatakah, Tasmaat sarva prayetnena vapanam dahanaat param/(Without ‘vapana karma’ or head shave, the karta is not authorised to perform Udaka-Pinda daana-Shraadha karmas after the preta karma and all these deeds would be fruitless otherwise. Again, ‘kshura karma’ before the ‘dahana’ is stated to be a ‘pitru ghaata’ and is equally condemnable.) The ‘Sangraha’ stipulates that who so ever undertakes the ‘dahana karma’ - be it a brother, or his son, any ‘Sapinda’, or ‘Shishya’, even young of age ought to shave off head and moustache. If the ‘dahana karma’ would necessarily have to be performed in the nights then ‘udaka kriya’ be performed and the vapana karma be postponed to next morning. Vapana or Head shave would be a ‘must’ to the kartas, even if the death takes place on a Friday night, on the tenth day, or otherwise but definitely in connection with the death of one’s own parents. Vapana vidhi is also prescribed at the deaths of grand fathers, father’s brothers, maternal uncle, elder brother, father in law, paternal aunts, mother’s sisters, sisters etc. even if one’s wife is in the family way. On the twelfth day when ‘sapindee karana’ would have been done, then vamana karma should not be done.
Dashama dina kartavya: Akhanda Darsha states that the duty of the Karta would be to give away daana of vasrta, raw rice, ghee, and a vessel to Brahmanas to offset the ‘nagnatva dosha’ or the blemish of nakedness to the departed. Navamvaasa - stilaaka darbhaaka kumbhamiti sambhrutyaa tirtham gatvaas
snatvaasa teerakrite kunde kartaa sankaalpya preta maavaahya; 'Ayaahi preta' iti shilaas sthaapyayet/ (The karta should take bath preferably in a water body, carry with him new clothes, tila seeds, darbhas and pot ful water and invoke the ‘Preta swarupa’ stating ‘aayaahi preta’ and welcome it into a stone. As long as the Kartha is freed from the ‘ashouched’, this stone as represented by the Preta should be offered water and ‘Pinda’. ) The Karta should be south faced, keep the darbha corners south ward and without entering a temple near the water flow keep a pinda on the threshold and leave the ‘pinda shesha’ into the water flow quietly. Two sizeable pindas of the size kapittha or bilva fruits be kept in ‘paarvana’ and a small pinda of dhatri phala size be given away at Gaya shraddha during Mahalaya paksha / fort night so dear to Pitru devatas. ‘Ekoddhisha Sapindana’ or meant only to one viz. the departed Soul be made of coconut size and offer the rest of egg size pindas at the rest of the shraddhas. Vastra paashaana kumbhaanaam sthalaayah karturyiparyaye, purvadato- dakam kuryaatpunarityeha Devalah/ (Smrityantara quotes that Devala Muni stated that the vastra-shila-ghata-thalai be retuned by karta only after installing them with respects with ‘udaka’after the Ashuddhi period. The ‘Preta paashaana’ or the stone into which the preta had been invoked into, should not be disturbed for ten days.) Adhaikottara vriddхи shaaraddham purvoktam dadyaat, Yasin dine vaavanti uda- kaanjali daanaani, taavanti shaaraddha nyaasa rupena pratayah deyaani/ Pradhamehni triteeyehi panchame, Saptame tadhaa Navamaikaadeshe chiva shannava shaaraddhamuchyate/ (Smrityantara continues to explain the ekottara vriddhi shaaraddha having been performed, each of the days of Ashuddhi demands ‘udakaanjali daana’ as per ‘shaaraddha nyaasa’; the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth and eleventh day of the six shraddhas.) Aaparedyustriiteeya syaam panchamyaam saptamyaam vaastheeni sanchanvavti/ (‘Asthi sanchayana’ be executed on the third, or fifth, or seventh days of ‘Ashuddhi’)
YogaYagnyavalkya prefers the ‘asthi nimajjana karma’ to be preferred in Ganga or Yamuna or Kaveri or Sarasvati and such other sacred rivers. He states further: Dashamehni pretasya mahaateekshudhavati tannivritijh, prabhuta balinaa bhavati dashama dina pindodakanaat/purvam kaaryah tilodakecha pindecha pradatte dashamehni ashmano sthaapanam krutvaa tatah pretam visarjayet/ (On the tenth day the preta would get extremely hungry and to assuage it bali or sacrifice is to be executed and that needs to be done before pindodaka daana, tilodaka and raising the shila as represented by the preta and finally the preta is released free.) If within the ten day period, Amavasya intervenes, then pinda karya be done thereafter.

Kartuu niyamas: Till such time that the Karta attains ‘Shuddhata’ or relief till preta vimo -chana, he has to consume only limited bland food with no salt or sweet taste and sleep on the ground with minimum comfort. Nashte shavaagnou tad bhasma samspru- syaarani mandhanam, Loukikaagnya ahithi Smarte sarva chittam dvayossamam/ As the shavaagni is lost, the Sacredness of that ash is as much as that of ‘araani manthana-agni’ or that of ‘Loukkaagni’! While the elder brother- the Karta would be with Asthi sanchayana, the younger brother might attend to performing Samskaras and Udaka Kriyas. Once the elder one returns, he would return to Ateeta Udaka pinda daanas, Svakaala kandodaka daana, and ekoddishta. Dampratyaha mritoukramaa: In the event of both husband and wife ending up at the same time, Harita Muni instructs: Damhatossaha mritintu saha daakriyaashthaadikaah, Pragdaahaadanyana ashecha tadurdhvantu punahkriyaa/ (In case of death of the Couple, Daahaadikas are to be done simultaneously or
other wise after the ‘dahana kaarya’ at the relevant times of death be performed accordingly) Pitrumedha Saara emphasises that in the event of separate deaths, the following be practised:

Hiranya shakala
nagnapracchhadana vaasastilodaka pindai- kottara vriddhi nava shraaddha sodha kumbha vrishorsarga
shodasha shraaddhia prithak pridhagbhava- nti charu karyam chithi kundamasthi shamchayanam shanti
homascha tantram edoddishsta sapindeekara -naadishu nimitta varana homou pridhavbavatah paaka
homa aishvvaadavadikam tantram/(All the related deeds like suvarna daana, vastra to shroud, tilodaka,
nava shraaddhas with seperate Pindas, Charukarya, Chiti / funeral kumbha/ pot, Asthi sanchayana, Shanti homa, Ekodddhista sapindeekarana at the Varuna - homas and so on be segregated twice all over.)

But in the event of simultaneous deaths, Harita Muni instructs:

Sanghata marane pitror dvaadashaahe
sapindanam, kuryaat putrastadanyes
haam tripakshe kaarayedbudhah/
(In the event of simultaneous ends,
the son as the karta should perform ‘sapindikarana’ on the twelfth day; to other simultaneous deaths of Sapinda Persons if any, the sapindikarana be done in ‘Tripakshas’ or three fortnights thereafter)

**Shodasha Shraadhas:**

Shodashaadeeni sarvaani kuryaadekaadashehan, Sapindeejkaranaam chaapi
kuryaa- dvaav dvaadashahanit/(The ‘Shodashaas’ are required to be performed on the eleventh date of the death, when ‘sapindeekarana’ too could be executed on the same day or on the twelfth day.)

Gokhila Maharshi explains the details of the Sixteen Shraddhas:

Desha kaalaadi vaishamyaanmrityu rogaadi
shankayaa, Ekaadashehi kaaryaanihyapa krishyaapi shodasha/
(On the eleventh day of the death, the Karta takes the precaution of performing Sixteen shradhaas in advance, as any of the limitations like sudden death, disease or such eventualities might occur there after) The list of sixteen shraaddhaas as scheduled during the course of the year after death and to be performed in advance on the eleventh day following the death are as follows:

Ekaadasho bhavedyaam maasyune hyuna maasikam, Traipakshikam
Tripakshakamn tripakshesyaadhunashaan maasikam tatdaa/Prati maasam mritaahaunaad cheti
shodasha/The first masika is on the eleventh day, then Unamaasika at less than one month,
Traipakshika or on the 45th day, Unashaanmaasika or before six months, the day/ tithi of death each month and Una abdika ie before the conclusion of the first year) Paithinasi Muni stipulates: Sapindee karanaarvaak kurvan shraadhdhaaani shodasha, Ekoottumahaa vidhhaanena kuryaatsarvaani taanitu/Sapindeekaranaad urdhvam yadaakuryaatadad punah, pratyaadam yo yadhaa kuryaat tathaakuryaatadada punah/(After sapindeekarana while performing shodasha shraaddhas every thing is to be done on ‘ekoddhista’.)

Yama Dharma Raja prescribes: Sapindikaranam naiva kuryaadevou - rasassutaah,
Ekodishtham nakurveeta yatee- naamchiva sarvadaa, Ahamkeadashe praapte paarvan shraaddha
maacharet/(Yam Raja stated that auorasa putras are forbidden to do sapindeekarana and similarly ekoddishtas are not to be done to ‘yatis’; on the eleventh day, paarvana shraaddha needs hower to be done)

Sapindeekarana: Sapindikarana is to be done on the twelfth day after death or on the day after a year, says Ashvalayana.

Samvatsare sapinde- karanam ekaadashe maasi sheshthaavaa chatturdhevaa dvadasadhe - nivaa/ (Bodhaayana states that sapindeekarana be performed within one year of death on the day of the eleventh month or the sixth month or the fourth month failing the twelfth day.)

Saagniastu yadaakartaa
preta shyaapyaagnimaan bhavet, Dvaadashheha tathaa kaaryam sapindeekaranam putih/ Ubhayoranagni
katve dwaadashaaddheadaa- yah kalaah vikalpante/(Sapindeekarana to father is to be done if both the Karta as also the departed father were of Agni karyas daily, then sapindikarana be better done on the twelfth day of the father’s death.) Shridhara Maharshi opines: Ekaadashaa ha maarabhya yaava daashodashaeaddi
naat,Sapindeekaranaam kuryaat tatah saptadasheehneevaa/(Sapindeekarana could be performed on any day between eleventh or even on the seventeenth) Garga Muni states: Krishna pakshetu
panchamyaam ashtamyaam darsha yevavaa, Ekadashyam tu kartavyam svalaalaa karanesati/
(Sapindeekarana be performed on krishna paksha panchami, Ashtami, Amavasya orEkadashi in case not possible on the twelfth day of death). Smruti Ratna instructs: Amaayaamchakshayahahe preta pakshe tadhaivachyaam, Shraddham sapindanam kuryaatiiti vaarou nashodhayate/(Shraddham and Sapindanam can be performed on Amavasya, day of death and Mahalaya Pakshas and there need not be discussion further). Now, Saapindya Adhikaara: Pituh putrena kartavyam pourenaaapi sapindanam, Tadabhaavet patnisyat patnyabhve sodaraha/ Aputrayaa mitriyaanta patiikuryaatsapindnam, Vayovasta - avisheshamanaa- drityasapindanam/Vayovasthaa visheshamanaadriitya sarvatra purushaanaam, Streenaam cha vivaadhaadurdhyam sapindeekaranam karyaneva/(Shankha Muni states that Sapindana could be performed to a father by a son, grandson, and if need be by wife or her brother. If there is no progeny, husband can perform to wife. In fact, any body married either a husband or wife might perform sapindikarana without reference to age or relationship) Having dealt with thus, the Saapindya prakara is explained by Brihadvishnu as follows: Pitumarana maarabhya dvaadashe divase charet,Preta bhaavavani nirmoha pretasyavaai pituh/Pitamahadabhihissardham sapindasaya pasidhyate,Samaadoaka bhavasayam siddhivardhecha pitusututah/Yashaam pitaamaahadadeenaam vidhinaa parvanenatu, Svapituh preta bhutasatyvekkodhishta vidhaanaath/(As one’s father dies, the Karta on the twelfth day performs sapindikanara to demolish the ‘preta bhava’ and as such the act needs to be done to the departed father by way of Ekodishthidh vidhana and to the Grand father by ‘paarvaaan vidhi’.) Smrityananta also states: Shraaddha dvaya mupakramya sapindikanaram bhavet, Paarvanam tatra purvam syaat ekodhhishamathaacharet/ Sapindikanara shraaddhe Devam purva niyoijayet, Pitramniyoijayet paschat tatah pretaam vinirvidhisheet/ Iti Devalam pramaah Shandilyascha mahamuni, yatkinchitaaparanam shraaddham tatra siddvayathnaa/ (On initiating the Shraaddha dvaya and sapindikanara, first perform Paarvana and then Ekoddishta. In the sapindikanara shraddha, the Karta should first address to Devas, then Pitru Devatas and then the Preta. Whenever parvana shraddha is to be done, a dvija should worship Vishnu foremost and then only the Shraaddha phala would be reapened best, as both Devala and Shandilya Munis assert unanimously)

Pinda samyojana vidhi: An authority on this subject viz. Pitrumedha Saara is quoted: Huta shessa mishrai -ranyaiistita yuktaiassata pindaan kritvaa, Ucchishtha sannidhou agnerdakshinaha tredhaa daksinag-raan decbhahaan samsteerya daksinaha mudh kah savyam jaanvahbhyateshu madhyama darbheshu maarjyaantaa mamapituh pitarah ityaadibhibh, paschima darbheshu maarjyantaama mamaa maataraah iti maarjyatraayaa, maaham kramena yetaalate pistutatia ityaadibhibh shadpindaan datvaa ye chatvaa manuyaashachatavaamanu iti prati pindam darbha muleshu lepam nimrujya, maarjyataaam mama pitaa pretaah maarjyantaama mamaa maataraa pratyapodatatvaam amuka gotra amuka sharman pretayetam pindaam upatishtheti preta pindam pradaaya, amuka gotre amuka naamipreta iti stryaaah/ (Now the huta sheshaanraa or the remnant cooked rice, mixed with tilaas be mixed and seven pindas be prepared and placed at ‘ucchistha’ or remnants of food to the South of Agni. Three each of darbhas be spread out, with tops facing south. ‘Maarjana’ or wash with water drops be sprayed saying ‘ maarjyantaam mama putuh pitarah-pitarah/ maarjyantaam mama maataaa maatrhu-maathtaas etc. Six pindas be placed following marjana of each of the pindas and having announced the name and gotra of the concerned persons, the pindas be placed.) Brahmanaabhyanujaataah samano manthra, samaaneva, iti dvaabhyaam, pretaaarghyam pitraaarghyapaatre ninaya tushneem preta pinda -maadaaayaa trethaah vibhajyaa atbhagaatrayam pitraadi pindaanam, purastaaanidaya vaitarani godaanam krtvaanujnyayapo, Madhumateebhih sangacchadhvam samaano mantra samaaneeva, Iti chaturbhispindaih sahatrayam
hastaabhyaam yuapatsam srijet/ (While reciting ‘Brahmanaabhyanujaatah samaano mantrah samaaneena’, the karta should hold ‘pretaaraghya’ with both the hands into the pitraaraghya paatra, take preta pindas , make three parts and place before the pitraadi pindas, perform vairtarini go daana and lift three of four pindas with both the hands and mix them up reciting the mantra: ‘Anuginapatompadhu matee -bhih sangucchadhvam samano mantrassamaneeva’. Now, the pitraadi pindaas and the preta pinda are mixed up with the mantra: ‘Ye samaamaaye saajaataa’ and with the ‘arghyodaka’ perform ‘maarjana’) Smrityantara states that when the gotra of any person is not known, then one could safely assume the gotra to be of Kashyapa as indeed the ‘sarva praja’ originated from Kashyapa Maharshi, as pe Vedas. When the names of Pitru-Pitaamaha- Prapitaamaha are not known then the father, grandfather and great grand father are called Prithivishat, Antarikshasat, and Divishat respectively. Jamadagni firmly believes that Vaitarini river flowing with unimaginable speed, full of putrid and unbearable smell with bones, hair and blood is impossible to cross but for godaana!

Soda kumbha vidhi: Katyayana Maharshi explains: Prati maasam darshaadouva maasikaadyaanya dineva, Ateeta sodakumbha shraadhaanyaahatyah dadyaat/ Sa pindeekaranaadurdvam varsham varshaardhamevaa, na kuryaatpaarvaa shraaddham ashtaakaana vihanyate/ Ashoucham dvaadasha - ahaantam nakuryaaddevaartar- chanam. Sakuryaat pitru kaaryaani daanam hoam japam tathaah/ (One can perform Soda kumbha shraddha at the beginning of every Amavasya day, or before each Maasika, along with any left over Agni karyas. But sapindeekarana or parvana shraddha are discounted as the left over Agni karyas. Since Asoucha persits till the twelfth day of Ashuichi after a death in the family, and Devatchanha, Pitru karyas, daana, homa and japas are not allowed.)

Abdika Shraaddha: Yasminmaasi mritih paksheya syayasyaam tithou bhavet, Tasyaameva tithou kuryaa daabdikam vichakshanah/ (Dharma Sudhhaa nidhi states that those who possess even normal awareness of Dharma would perform Abdikas on the tithi, paksha and maasa of death of a person concerned every year) Chandrika Grandha too having confirmed the same explains about the Souramaana and Chaandra maana: Darshaaddarshcchaaandrah trimshaaddhivasaasta sauavano maasah, Ravi sankrama chihnou - sou Soura maaso nigadyate tajnath/ Darbhantah purimaantasha chaandhro maasad vidhaayatah, Jaatibhedaddresas bhoodaat toucha maasou vyavasthithiu/ Narmadaa dakshine bhaage darshaantao maa ittyate, Narmadottara bhaagetu purimaanta iti sthitih/ Tratechaandramaaasam shastam nashraaddeshu prashayate, Ashthirascchaandra maasasaatyat shitra siurotra kaaranam/ (The persons with knowledge affirm that from Amavasya to Amavasya be reckoned as Chaandramaana, and thirty days from Saavana maasa occurs Solar Eclipse and hence Soura maana. From Amavasya to Purnima, Chandra maana is divided in two parts. Due to differences of Jaati and Desha, two months have come to be counted; the area down South of Narmada, Amavasya is considered as the last day of a month where as the land up beyond Narmada, Pournami as the last day of a month. It is stated that Chaandra maasa is fruitful to perform vratas, but not shaddhas; chandra maasas are unsteady while Soura maasas or firm and steady.) Aaditya gatimupajeevyayaana nishpatteh Souramevaitat/ (Thus, divisions occur as Soura maana and Chandra maana, due to the movement of Sun) In case during the Souramaana, there occur two tithis, then Masika Abdikas be performed on the subsequent tithi. If on that tithi there occurs Solar Eclipse then the Abdika be performed after ‘aparaha’ or if the eclipse takes place after aparahna, then the ceremony be done next tithi. Gautama Muni states: Madhyaahaana vyapapin yasyaatsaikodhishthe tithir bhavet, aparahaana vyapin syaaat paarvanesaa tithir bhavet/(If the shradhha is of ‘ekoddishta’ type then one should reckon the ‘madhyaahaana vyapi tithi’ while ‘paaraana shraddha’ be ‘aparahaana vyapi’) Vyasa clarifies: Muhurta
tritayam praatah taavaanevatu sangavah, Madhyaahnah trimuhurtasvaadaparaahna- api taadrushah,
Saayaaahnastri mhurtastu sarva karma bahishkruata/ Roudraschatrastadhdhau maitras - tadhaa
saalakatah smritah, Savirascha jayantascha gaandharvah kutapa tathau/Rouhinasca virimhas- cha
Vijayonairasthaa, Maahendro Varunaschaiva bodhah panchadashasmrnitaah/ (There are three muhurtas
in a day viz. three muhurtas in praatah kaala, three muhurtas in sangama kaala, three in madhyaha kaala
and three in saayam kaala. No shraddha karmas be done in saayam kaala. During the day time, there are
15 muhurtas vix. Roudra, Chaitra, Maitra, Saalakata, Jyanta, Gandharva, Kutapa, Rouhina, Virinch, Vijiya,
Nairuta, Maahendra, Varuna and Bodha) Kaala nirnayakara says: Almost all of the Shrutis and
Smritis reckon the day time into five divisions and normally this method is accepted.) Bodhayana
clarifies: Aparaahnadvaa vyapinyateetasya cha yaatithih, Kshaye purvaat kartavyaa vriddhyokaarya
(tadhottaraa/ (If there are two ‘apararahnaas’ on the same tithi, Shraaddha karma be considerd for the
following day). Pitrumritaha pitrputamaamaahaa-prapitaamaahaamaaduddeshyatam, Maatra Pitamaah
prapitaamahinaam uddeshvattam/ In the abdika for the father, the grand father and great grand father be
also addressed while the Maatra abdika, the pitamahi and pra-pitamahi too are included in the list of three
generations. Vishnu Rishi further clarifies that in the mother’s abdika: Maatuumritaha pitradeen homa
pindaah prajpyayet/Ekoddhishteshu sarveshu sapindeekaranetathaa, Maasikesvaabdikeshu cha na
tila tarpanam/ (In the mother’s abdika, Pitraadis be offered homa pinda puja. Another caution is
that Tila tarpana s are forbidden in ekoddishta in maasikas, sapindeekaranas and Abdikas )

Mala maasa or Adhika maasa: Chandromaasohya smakraanto mala maasa prakeerititah, Yadaadvi
sankraa - ntiyukto maaso bhavet tadaa kshayamaaso varjaneeyah/ Amhaspatirvaidyasmin chandre dvaa
sankra - mou tathaah, Darshadwyayam yadaiaasmin Suure samsarpako bhava/(Mala maasa is defined as has
no Solar Eclipse during Chaandra mana and is also called Adhika maasa. If during one month, there occur
two Solar Sankramanas, that is called Akshaya maasa, said Amhaspati. In the event of two Surya
Sankrantis occurring in one chandra maana then that month be discarded too. Again in one Soura maasa if
two Amavasayas occur, then that is called Samsarapaka.Incidentally, during the Mala Masaa, digging of
wells, water bodies, yagnya karmas and daana vratas are forbidden.) However, Kaala Nirnaya endorses
Jaata krama, Pumsavana, Seemanta and such acts could be approved during the Adhika maasa if need be.

Darsha Shraaddha: Vishnu Purana describes this in detail: Shraddham shraddaanvitah kurvan preena
yatayahilam jagat, Maasi maasyaite pakshe pancha dashyaam Nareshwara/ Nanirvpati yah
shraddham prameeta pitrukodvijah, Indukshaye maasi maapisrayashchitteeyatehi sah/ Pitrun Maataa
mahaamschiva dvijah shraaddhena tarpayet, Amaashtakaasum smkraautou paataadou grahaneshu cha,
Snaatvaat tilodakam datvaa tataa shraaddham samacharet/Aparaahnah pitrunaantu yaaaphaarnaana
yaayini, Sagraahyaa pitru karyeshu na purvaastaamnyaayini, Alpaaparaahnayyayaaagraahhyaayasad
adhika bhavet/( One should actually perform shraaddha on every Amavasya tithi with devotion and faith
to truely please Narayana. A dvija who failed to perform shraaddha to his dead father could atone by
shraddhas every Amavasya. Even otherwise, he is instructed to satisfy the Pitru-Maata ganas with regular
Darsha Shraaddhas on Amavasyas. Besides Amavasyas, Tilodaka Shraaddhas be offered on Ashtakas,
Sankrantis and Grahanas. It is essential to reckon suitable Tithis and ‘Aparaahnaa’ considerations
properly.) Narada Maharshi states that in case Amavasya extends Aparahnas then preference be accorded to
Shraddha karmas and then take up Shubha Karyas.

Ashtakaa Shraaddhas: Shounaka Muni describes the Ashtaka Shraaddha vidhi: Hemanta shihsira
yoshchaturnaama para pakshaanaam Ashtameeshu ashta - kaah/ Yaamaaghyaaah pournamaasya
uparistaadvyashtakaa tasyaam, Ashtmi jyeshtayaa sampadyate- taamekaashtaki tyachakshate/
Tilodakam pradaatavyam nirdesthenaapti bhaktitah, Ashtakaashraaddha sidhyardham
proushhtapannaaghaha maasayoh/ (The krishna paksha Ashtami tithis of the hemanta and shishira months
of Margashira-Pushya-Maagha-Phalgunas are called Ashtakas. Of the two Ashtakas followed by Maagha
Pournami, the one with Jyeshta is called Ekashtaka. It is required that a vipra, even if not so well to do,
must offer tilodakas with faith for the fulfillment of Ashtakas shraaddhs during Bhandrapada-Maagha
months.)

Mahalaya Shraadha: Markandeya Maharshi instructs all the Vipras: Kanyaagate savitari dinaani dasha
panchacha, aarvanaiva vidhinaa tatra shraaddham vidheeyate/(As Surya enters Kanya Raashi’s first
fortnight, parvana vidhi shraaddha be performed daily.) Jaabaali gives further details on the subject:
Aagatepi Ravou kanyaam shraaddham karveeta sarvadaa, Aashaadhyaah panchamah pakshah
prashastah pitru karmasu/ Putraanaayustathaarogyam Aishvaryaamatulam tathaa, Prapnoti panchame
datvaa shraadddam kaamaanastathaaparaan/ Raveh Kanyaagatvena pakshoyam pujya ipyate, Aadou
vedaantarentavaa saahasth kanyaagate Ravou/ Kanyaagate Savitari itaroyantvai Sutaawn, Shunyaa preta
puree sarvaa yaavadvrischia darshhanam/ Daivam pitaatato mataa sapatni tathaa, Maataaamahaaas -
satapatnekaah pitruvriyaa bhratarassutahait/Pitrusyha saamatulaascha, tanbhaginascha jaamaataah,Bhagini
dhutiia bhaavaya svashhuro bhaavakasnushaa/ Svaaaluko gururaachaaryassvaami sakhyadayah kramaat,
Bhoyaa Mahaala shaadde ete kaarunikaahvyoh/ Pitroh shraaddhantu nirvartya pashaah kuryaa mahaalayam/
(As Surya enters kanya Raashi, Mahalaya Shraddha is to be performed; Ashadha Panchami is ideal for Pitru Karmas and those who do so
would surely attain good health, longevity, opulence and fulfillment of desired wishes. As Surya enters
kanya raashi the Pitru Paksha is reckoned as extremely sacred; shraaddhas are best done in the beginning,
or midway or at the end. The belief is that Surya’s entry heralds the presence of departed pitru devas amid
their progeny on earth and till such time that Surya enters Vrischika Raashi, the pretapuri elsewhere
would get emptied. The relatives who should partake in the Mahalaya Shraddha bhojana include Daivam,
and all others if departed viz. father, mother, step mother, maternal grandfather, his wife, father’s
brothers, brothers, children, father’s sisters, maternal uncles, son in law, sister’s daughter, wife, sister’s
husband, father in law, daughters in law, son in law, Guru and friends as these are all such would shower
blessings to the karta (s). If father’s annual shraddha precedes in the Pitru Paksha, then the priority is to
the annual ceremony first and then perform mahalaya shraddha.)

Vriddhi Shraadddhas: Vishnu Purana presribes: Jaatasya jaata karmaadi kriyaa kaandamaheshhatah,
Putrasya karveeta pitaara shraadham chaahbyudatmaamaam/ Naamaanoo chooula godaanaa soomopanayana
pumsave, Snaamaadhinaa vivaaheshu naandi shraaaddham vidhiyate/ Purvaaana eva naandisyat
apararahanetru paitrukam/ (As a son is born, Jaataaadi karmas be performed significantly and at the same
time the Pitru karyas too assume considerable importance. Naama karana, Anna praashhana, Choula,
Godaana, Soma, Upanayana, Pumsavana and so on. All these deeds are to be initiated with ‘Naandi
Shraddhas’ or opening ceremonies; these are all common to snaana-aadhana-vivaahadi deeds of high
auspiciousness and fulfillment. Always the Naandi Shraddhas are required to be done in the pre-noon
timings while the paitru karmas are to be initiated after the noons.) Devala Muni feels: Shihaaleeshu giri-
prishtheshu teerteshvayataneshu cha, Vivikteshu cha tushyanti pitarasthamaa/ (Shraadddha Karyas
performed on mountain slopes, tirthas, temples and Lonely Places provide great happiness to Pitru
Smrityantara states: **Amaapaatas - cha Samkrantistadhaa Vaidritirevacha, Ashtakaashechaiva Manvaai Yugaadisicha Mahalayaya/ Chandra Suryoparaagascha Gajacchhaayaa tathaiva, Dravya Brahmana sampattih shriaddha kaalaah prakeertitaah/ Na Brahmanyam pareeksheta daive karmani dharma vit, Pitre karmani tu praapte pareeksheta prayatnatah/Ashrotriyah pitaa yasya putrasyaadvedapaaragah, Jayaayaam samavaayor – vidyaadyasya syaa shrotiiriyah pitaa/Shrotiiryaayaiva deyaa havyakavyaani daatrubhii, Arhattamaaya viprayya tasmai dattam mahaah phalam/ (Shradhas along with daanas are appropriate on Amavasyas, Solar and Lunar Eclipses, Vaidhruti yoga timings, Ashtakas, Manvaadis, Yugadis, Mahalaya Pakshas, and Gajacchhaayas or when Chandra is in Makha and Surya is in Hasta nakshatras. Normally one might not test the depth of Brahmanas during the Deva karyas but certainly do so in the Pitru karyas.Now when the father might not be a Shrotiira but a son is or vice versa; in such situations, the ‘karma phala’ weighs higher to putras or vice versa. The ‘daataas’ or donors while offering ‘havya kavyas’ must keep in mind as to who is the best among the Vipras, as in that case the returns of the charities would indeed be the best.) The Smrityantara is quoted further: **Yasmin maasi mritaaha syaattanmaa sakhriyaa kshura karma na kurveeta paraaanmah ch ratim tyajet/ Gomayoda bhumi bhaajana bhaanda shoucham kuryaat, Yava vreehisa godhumaastita mudgaassarpashaah, Priyangavah kovidaaraa nishaavaashchaatra shobhanaah/ Vinaa maashena yat shriaddham kritama vyakkritam bhavet, Annantu sa dadhi kheera ghritam sar karaanvitam/ Maasham preenaati sarvaanvai pitruhmane keshavah, Madhunaa parama pracetasaarvaan kaamyaaan dishchanticha,Yadhaa vibhavasaareena vastramdadaattu patruke/ Vasunvaadi pitru Rudraaneva pitaamahaaan, Prapitaa – mahaamstathaa aadityaaan shriadharmaan paraanmahaa/ Trinaani vaa gavedadyatg pindaavadaahapi nirvapet, Tilodakaih Pitruvaapi tarpayet snaana purvakam/Shraddhaam kulam yah kuryaat jaatyavas – thaadypekshhayaa, Shraadhaaangaam shepyavaapnoti makhya shriaddha phalam nararh/(Persons who are to perform ‘Abdikas’ in a specified Paksha or Maasa should refrain from kshura karma or shaving or head hair, eating out and copulation. All the surroundings and vessels for cooking and eating must be washed well with cow dung. Yava, wheat, rice,tilas, moong, priyangava, kanchana etc. are auspicious. ‘Maasha made bhakshyas’ are inevitable. Curd, ghee, cow’s ghee, cooked sweet rice and plain rice are what the eats lapped up by Pitru devatas and fullfill the desires of the Kartas. Honey satifies pitaras most. Vastra daanas are donated the best. Pitru Devas are Vasudevas, grand fathers are Rudra swarupas and Prapitaa-mahaas are Aditya Swarupas.After pinda pradaana puja and naivedya, bhoktaa bhjoana and tilodaka tarpanas, cows be treated with grass, fruits, and pindas. In this manner, even a part of Pitru shraddas is peformed with devotion and faith, humans irrespective of varnas and ashramas would certainly reap the fruits of worshipping Pitrus for their redemption and blessings for one’s own fullfillment of desires.) Stressing the supreme duty of Shraaddha karma, Yama Dharma Raja avows: Ye yajanti pitrun devaavan brahmanaan sahutaashhnaan, Sarva bhutantarataatmaanam Vishnuneva yajantite/ Aayuh putraa yashah swargam keertim pushtim blam shriyam, Pashvan sukham dhanam dhaanyam prapnuyat pitrupujanaat/
(Those who worship devatas, pitru devatas and learned brahmanas are such as having worshipped the Vishnu Himself. More specifically, Pitru Puja bestows longevity, health, fame, strengthn and prosperity).

**Praayaschitta Prakarana**

Praayo naama tapah proktam chittam nishchaya uchyate, Tapo nishchaya samyuktam praayaschitta – mihochyate/ Angira Maharshi defines the word Praayah or Tapas and chitta is resolution. Manu explains: Akurvan vihitam karma ninditam cha samaacharan, Prasaktaschaendriyaardheshu prayaas- chiteeyate narah/ (As human beings do not perform the prescribed deeds but tend to detract due to undue and disapproved desires of body and mind but realise sooner than later, then the acts of atonement are described as prayaschittas) Yagnyavalkya warns that in case, such acts of atonement are not followed properly and timely, then at the termination of the life’s balance sheet of one’s deeds is made and the negative results are necessarily to be suffered at the main hells named as follows: Taamishra, Lohashanku, Maha niraya, Shalmali, Rourava, Kumbhila, Puti Mritika, Kaala Sutra, Sanghaata, Lohtoda, Savisha, Samvratavaana, Maha Naraka, Kaakola, Sanjeevana, Mahapatha, Aveechi, Andhataamishra, Kumbnpee - paaka, Asiparavana and Tapan. Yagnyavalkya further describes: Mahapataka jaan ghoraannarakaan praaapya daaraunaan, Karma khayaat prajaayante mahaav paatakinastviha/(Persons who have committed crimes and sins of varying intensity would indeed necessarily under go the off -setting punishments and are reborn in their ensuing lives in manifold forms in the Creation as per their own’s karma phala in the framework and final decision of the Supreme Lord.) The examples cited by Yagnyavalkya include: birth of deer, dog, pig, or camel for Brahma hatya; donkey, nishada or hunter to Brahmanas for ‘Suraapaana’; thief of gold as krimi-keetaka-patangas; and one who forces a guru’s wife to bed as a bush, grass or creeper! The Maharshi further lists out a person killing a Brahmana to be reborn as Kshaya Rogi; Sura paana as one with black teeth; a thief of gold as one with awkward hand nails, and a Guru Patni spoiler as a leper. Yagnyavalkya apprehends: Atyuktataih punya paapairihaiva phalamashnute, Tribhirvarshaih tribhih maasaaih tribhih pakshaih tribhirdinaih/ Punya paapa phala could be paid off in one’s own life time within three years, three months, three fornights and even within three days! Besides the sins of persons as mentioned, one who publicises other’s blemishes would have a lasting foul smell in the mouth and nose; the thief of Dhanya loses his body parts; the one who mixes other harmful materials would be born with some part of the body or another; a thief of cooked rice would be born with stomach ailments; a thief of books would be reborn as dumb or deaf; a thief of clothes as a ‘Shaitya rogi’ or a thief of horses as a lame one. Yevam karmavisheshena jaayante sadvigarhitaah, Jada mookaandha badhiraa vikritaakritaah/ (In this manner, the resultant sins of one’s life might end up rebirths or the same births with appropriate retributions like the fools, the blind, the deaf, the dumb or the ugly.) The thieves of precious stones could be born as pot makers; the thieves of dhanya, metal, water, honey, milk, juices and ghee could be born again as mice, swan, crane, kruni keetaka, crow, dog and mongoose respectively. Similarly the thieves of meat, oil, salt and curd would turn out respectively as kite, bat, crane and black sparrow. Such examples abound. Yadvaatadvaa p;aradravyamapahritya balaanarah, Avashya yaati tirvyaktvam jagdhaachavahutam havih/ (Even if one performs Sacred homa karyas, yet he resorts to stealing, he would receive retribution soon or obtains rebirths as ‘pashu pakshis’!)

**Sarva vidha paapa:** The nine kinds of serious sins as descibed by Vishnu Maharshi are: Purushasya kaamakrodha lobhaakhyaam riputraya ghoram bhavati, tenaam akraanto mahapataka ati paataka, samapaatako papaatakeshu pravartate samkeernakaraneshu, malinkareshu jaati bhramsha karaneshu
prakeenakeshucha/(Every human being is subjected to Arishad vargaas viz. ‘Kaama Krodha Lobha Moha Mada Matsaras’ of which three types of the worst three are Kaama-Krodha-Lobha; being subjected by these are the victims of Maha Paataka, Atipaataka, Samapaataka, Upapaataka, Sankeernakarana, Malini karana, Apaatreekarana, Jaati bhramsha karana and prakeernaka) Manu defines Maha Patakas:
Brahmahatyaasuraapaanam steyam Gurvangana- gamah, Mahaantipaatakaanyaahuh
samsargaschaapitaissah/ (Killing of Brahmans, drinking intoxicants, thieving, and sleeping with Teacher’s wife as also keeping company with any one of these extreme sinners is the worst of sins) Yama Raja declared that the Atipatakas are to sleep with mother’s sister, brother’s wife, daughter, father’s sister, maternal uncle’s wife, or her sister and mother in law are the Atipatakas. Yagnavalkya talks of a woman sleeping with a low class male, garbha patana and killing one’s own husband are Ati Paatakas too.
Defining Sama patakas, Yajnyavalkya states: Gurunaamadhik – shepah Vedanindaa suhrudvadha, Brahma hatyaasamam jneyam adheetasyacha naashanam/ (Criticising Guru, criticising Vedas, killing a close friend, conciusly ignoring and forgetting and even destroying Scriptures are as severe as Brahma hatya.) Drinking coconut water in bronze vessels or salted cow milk; taking bath in washer men’s water flows, drinking gavya or cow’s urine in a copper vessel as intoxicating as Suraa paana. Upa paatakas include Gohatyaa, endorsing yagina saadhana by ineligible person, sleeping withelse’s wife, sale of the Self, discarding parents and Guru, discontinuing svaaddhyaaya and agnihotra karyas; discarding sons, giving away svaaddhyaayaagni to an unwedded maid, kanya dushana, money laundering, selling of wife and children; accepting money to teach adhyayana, sale of unsaleable items, depending on the earnings of women, cooking for eating all by himself and none else, eating or serving rotten cooked rice, pilferages, negation of Gods and so on. Sankarikarana is yet another heinous deed of killing donkeys, horses, camels, deer, elephant, goat, sheep, fish, serpents and buffalows. ‘Malinee karana’ includes the killing of krimikeetakas, consumption of food after alcoholic drinks; stealing flowers and timidity. ‘Apaatri karana’ includes taking loans from questionable persons, practising commerce and trade by Brahmans, Serving low caste persons and constant practice of ‘asatyaa’. ‘Jaatibhramsha karana’ is when Brahmans are harassed and molested, consuming alcoholic drinks and ‘Svalinga samparka’.

Prayaschittas: Prayaschittamakaamaanam kaamaavaaptouna vidyate/ There might be penitence for wrong actions done out of ignorance but conscious deeds of vice are unpardonable. Manu defines:
Akaamatah krite paape prayaschittam vidurbudhaah, Kaamaakaritepyaahureke Shruti nidarshanaat/ (The Learned ones vouchsafe the conscious and unknowing lapses as equal and demand the same kind of Prayaschitta.) But Smrityantara clarifies: Vihitam yadakamaanam kaamaattu dvigunam bhavet/ (Sins on account of conscious misdeeds have double the effect of the ones unknown). The Grandha also states that Prayaschitta is prescribed to those who made killings, proposed the misdeeds, besides endorsing, guiding, encouraging, assisting, providing arms, giving food, shielding, denying and finally breaking down to have witnessed the act. Paraashara Muni states: Veda vedaanga vidushaam Dharma shastram vijaana-taam,Svakarfma rata Vipraanaam svakam paapam nivedayet, Yatpaapam kartru vyatiriktena kena chidapinaajaatam,Tadrahasyam tasya prayaschittamapirahasya kartavyam/(Veda vedaanga vidushaam Dharma shastram vijaana-taam,Svakarfma rata Vipraanaam svakam paapam nivedayet, Yatpaapam kartru vyatiriktena kena chidapinaajaatam,Tadrahasyam tasya prayaschittamapirahasya kartavyam/ (Veda vedaanga vidushaam Dharma shastram vijaana-taam,Svakarfma rata Vipraanaam svakam paapam nivedayet, Yatpaapam kartru vyatiriktena kena chidapinaajaatam,Tadrahasyam tasya prayaschittamapirahasya kartavyam)
meals and finally no bhojana for three days in a go’. ‘Paada kriccha prayaschitta: Yagyavalkya Muni prescribes: Eka bhuktena naktena tathavayaachaetena cha, Upavaasaenachaikena paadah kricchhah parikeertitah/ (Eating once in the night on the first day, another night of unsolicited bhojana and the third night no meal at all is called Paada kricha vrata.) Ardha kriccha prayaschitta: Saayam praatah tathai voktam diva dvayamtu naashneeyaakrucchhaardham tadvidheeyate/ (Eating only in the evening on one day, one day in the morning, two days of unsolicited meals and two days of ‘upavaasa’ is called Ardda kriccha) Ati kriccha prayaschitta: Parashara Muni: Navaahamati kricchasyaat paanipuraanna bhojnah, Tritraatra mupavaa seesyaadati Kricchaashyaa uchyate/ (Eating fistful bhojana for nine days, then fasting three nights is termed Ati kriccha) Bodhaayana describes Kricchaati kriccha prayaschitta: Ababhaksha striyahaanetaan vaayu bhakshastatah padam, Esha Kricchhaati kricchhastu vigjneyassoti paavanah/ (For three full days one should survive on water only, and another consequent three days on vaayu bhakshana is defined as Kricchaati kriccha prayaschitta).

Chaandraayana vrata is described by Maha Muni Vasishtha as follows: Chaandraayananam dvividham pipeelikaa madhyam yava madhyam cheti/ (Two kinds of Chandrayanaas are defined, one is pipeelikaa madhyam and another Yama madhyam) Maasasya krishna pakshadou graasaaanadya charterlacha, Graasaa pachaya bhojeesan paksha shesham samaapayet/ Tathaiva Shukla pakshaadou graasamekam bhunjeeta chaaparam, Graasopachaa bhojeesan pakshashesham samaapayet/ Shuklapratipadi graasamekumupakramyaa pratidinamekaita graasa vriddhaya, Purnimaayaam panchadasha graasaa evam pratidinina ekaika graasaahaane sati/ Amavaa syaayaam upavaasa iti, Madhya sthalyaadava madhya chaandraayanan bhavati/ (Eat one fistful of cooked rice a day on an increasing scale for fourteen days in a fortnight from prathama tithi in krishna paksha till Purnima and the fistfuls on a decreasing scale day by day till purmima in the next Shukla prathama again. This is the course of Chandrayana Vrata called ‘yava madhya chaandraayana vrata’).

Brahma hatyaadi maha patakas: Setum drishtvaa samudrasya Brahmahatyaam vyapohati, Setum drishtvaa vishuddhaatmaa tvavagaahet saagaram/ ( Soon on visioning Rameshwara Setu, the Brahma hatya sin would get destroyed. After seeing the Bridge built by Shri Rama, sacred bathing in the Samudra, the sinner’s body and heart get purified instantly) Thereafter, the sinner concerned should set up a hut in the nearby forests and continue to stay there with a skull as a flag, and beg for food to attain purity and peace of mind. He should shave his head, take three baths, spend nights amid the cow herds, and with stand the onslaughts of wind, rain, Sun heat and so on. Then one should recall how the cow was killed and then practise the relevant vratas: if killed by sticks then ‘saantavana’ prayaschitta; by stones then Praajaapatya, by builders then tapta ‘kriccha’ and if killed by arms and metallic items then the redemption by way of ‘ati kriccha’. Further, Yama prescribes: Taamra paatraashitam gavaym, naalikerodakam tadaa, Lavamaasaktam payaschivv madhya gandham tadhaivvacha, peetvaa dwijashcharet chaandram praja - patya kaamataah/(Contained in a copper vessel, mix of Cow’s urine, coconut juice, salted milk, and gandha mixed alcoholic drinks should be served to the dvija performing chandrayana or praajaapatya vratas) To redeem the sins of stealing gold or drinking intoxicants, charity of gold be given away to a learned Brahmana, prescribes Yagnyavalkya. Jaabaali suggests: Kupodakena saptaaaham dnaanamushne vaarinaa, Mriththikaabhirvimaashoucham krivaa saaptaahamevacha/ Praajaapatyam vishuddhyardham char et pooto bhaveddvijjah Pancha gavaym tatah peetvaa putobhavat naanyadhaa/(If a dvija has served a cruel tyrant, he should bathe with ground-well water on seven days continuously, with hotwater with as many days, followed by praajaapatya. Thereafter he should be served with Pancha gavya for Shuddhi!)
Rahasya paapa praayashchitta: Manu suggests: Vedaa bhyaasonvaham shaktyaa mahaa yagnya kriyaakshamaa, naashayantyaatu paapaani mahaa paatakaajanyapii/ Yathaindhatjesaav vahnih paapam nirdayatikshanaaat, Savayaahriti praavakaaah praanaayamaamaastu shodasha, Apii bhrunahanam maasaatput-nantyaraharah kritaah/ (Nitya Vedaabhyasa, yagynya kriya, kshama lakshana in their intensity are most certainly worthy of demolition of Maha Patakas. Even very serious ‘maha paatakas’ like ‘bhruna hatya’ are sure to evaporate with the daily practice of sixteen pranayaamas each time with vyahriti yukta pranava as many a time as possible daily!) Paraashara is convinced:Chandraayanan yaa vakam cha tulaa purusha evachaa, Gavaamchaivaanugamanam sarvapaapa pranaashanam/ (Yavamadhya chandrayana, Tulaa purusha and ‘Gavaanugamana’ or following herds of cows with ‘shraddha’ would demolish any volumes of Great Sins). Paithinasi Rishi is confident: Sarva praasaktopi dhyaanimishamachyutam, Punastapavi bhavatii panki paavana paavanah/ (Despite having perpetrated innumerable and serious sins, basically a Tapasvi could surely revive himself with Achyuta Dhyana) Bhrigu Maharshi emphasises: Kotikotimanaanaam vai bhitidam samupasthitam, Raama raametii sankeertya tannamaashayati maanavah/Sarveshaameva paapaavaaan prayschittamidam smritam, Naatah paratataram punyam trishu-lokeshu vidiyate/ (As crores of human beings have in their life times incessant troubles and tribulations daily which appear as never ending, the unique solution is only the ‘Prayaschitta’ that demolishes all these instantly and that indeed is the ‘Rama Nama Sankeertana’ which has no parallel in the trilokas among the Pnya Karyas of mortals!) Brahma Vaivarta assures: Sarva paapayuto vaapi keertiyannarim Haram, Shuddyantahkarano bhutaajayate pankti paavanah/ (Even he who is replete with unforgivable record of blemishes would most certainly redeemed with purity and excellence, once the self-absorbing hymn of Harihara is sung from his heart and soul then he would accomplish the status of Pankti Pavana or the great purifier of one and all who are ahead and behind in the line.) Atri Muni too assures: Ekaadasha gunaanvaapi Rudraanaavartiya Dharmavit, Mahaa paapairapi sprishto muchyate naatra samshayah/ (As no human being could claim perfection and is most ceratainly liable to commit flaws in one’s life, the most effective remedy which would never ever fail to redeem is indeed the outstanding Japa of reciting Rudra Namakam Chamakam eleven times a day and for sure this is the most effective and never failing opportunity open to all! Hemadri Rishi suggests: Krucochuyutantu Gayaatraa Vipra dwaadasha bhojanam,Tila home sahsram vaa samameta chatushtayam/ (The four magnificent redeemers of one’s gravest sins are the execution of Kriccha vrata, ten thousand numbers of Gayatri Japa, mrishtaaanna bhojana of twelve Brahmans daily and thousand tila homa prakriyas.) Parashara too pledges as follows: Krucoch devya yutam chaiva praanaayamahashatadvayam, Punya tirthaaraadra shira snaaam dvaasasha sankhyayaa Dviyojaanam teertha yaatraa kruchamekam prakalpitam/Krucocha vrata, daily Gayatri Devi Japa, ten thousand prana yaamas, and Tirtha yatras of two yojanas and punya snaanas at the Sacred Places are all indeed of great significance).

Vedah Smritah Sadaachaaraah Svasyacha priyamaatmanah, Etad chaturvidham praabuh saakshaat Dharmasya lakshnam/ (The four corner-stones of Dharma are Veda, Smritei, Sadaachaaraa and above all, one’s own Inner Conscience.)