

### What is Upakarma?

Upakarma, means "Beginning" and it is historically, the day was considered auspicious for beginning the Vedic studies. This is on this day one has to start study of Vedas after doing samarpana of what he has studied in the earlier years.

Rugveda Upakarma is done normally on Shravana Hunnime with Shravana Nakshatra. But Yajurveda Upakarma is done normally on Hunnime itself.

Even though the main function of Upakarma is Yagnopaveetha Dharana, it involves many procedures.

- a. Samarpana of what we have studied from previous Upakarma to this Upakarma to Vedavyasadevaru which is termed as **"Utsarjana"**. All Brahmins must study Vedaas and other Madhwa Shashtraas.
- b. The purohit or the Achar will teach us some of the Veda Mantras of all the Chaturvedaas, i.e, atleast one or two lines from each Vedas.
- c. The purohit also teaches one line of Brahmasootra, Sarvamoola granthas, etc as a mark of start of Study of Vedas and other Shastra granthas. We must continue to study further. But in majority of the cases, our study will stop on that day itself.
- d. This auspicious day also happens to be the day when Srimannaaraayana took the incarnation of Hayagreeva devaru. Hayagreeva devaru is worshipped as the God of Knowledge and he is the upasya moorthy of Sri Vadirajaru. Hayagreeva, is one of the early

incarnations. Lord Vishnu took to restore the Vedas and give them back to Brahma. Vedas were stolen and hidden at the bottom of the sea by the demon killed retrieved the Vedas and restored them to Brahma for the benefit of mankind. In this incarnation, the head is of a horse while the rest of the body is of a human, possessing four hands.

- e. Nobody is entitled to perform any other Samskaara without having gone through the Yagnoopaveeta samskaara according to Manusmriti. Brahmins are well aware of the need of the Yagnopaveeta (sacred thread) perform the ceremony, and also adorn life-long, yagnopaveeta. One must undergo Yagnopaveeta Samskaara before the Vivaaha Samskaara (marriage ceremony). Similarly, Shraaddha karma is not valid unless the kartru had undergone the yagnopaveeta samskaara. Even when a person does not wear a yagnopaveeta regularly, priests insist upon it during specific periods, during rituals.
- f. Importance of The Janivara or Yagnopaveeta, the sacred thread –
- i. Three thread Janivara symbolic of three debts one need to pay —to the teacher, to the Gods, and to the forefathers according to Taittareeya Samhita.
  - ii. It also stands symbolically of Brahma Vishnu Maheshwara Sannidhana.

- iii. It also symbolizes the main Vedas Rug, Yajur and Samavedas.
- iv. It also symbolizes the three characters, the Gunaas – Sattva, Rajas and Tamo Guna.
- g. It is said in Saamaveda Chandogya-sootra, that drawing one strand from each Veda, Brahma made a composite string of three strands. Vishnu multiplied it by three with knowledge, action and worship. Chanting the Gaayatri Mantra Shiva tied an eternal knot..
- h. In this way Yagnopaveeta comprises of nine threads. Nine threads represent nine divinities. The first: **Omkaara**, the second: **Agni**, The third: **naaga**, the fourth: **Soma** (Chandra), the fifth: **pitrugalu** (forefathers); the sixth: **Prajaapati** ; the seventh: **Vaayu**, the eighth: **Surya**, and the ninth: **Vishwedevegale**.
- i. **Tarpana** – On this day, we (Tarpanadhikarigalu) have to give Pitru Tarpana to forefathers, Gurugalu, and others. Apart from forefathers, everybody has to give tarpana to Rishis.
- j. Everybody has to perform **Upakarma** - All brahmanas should perform upakarma homa invariably. Only for those who are having Soothaka or Vrudhi during the said period, they need not do Upakarma on that day. However, after the soothaka or vrudhi is completed,

they must do the Upakarma homa and have the yagnopaveetha changed.

k. Why some people wear two or three or four janivaaras?–

**First Janivaara** - For Nitya Karmanustana Yogyata siddhyartham – A Brahmachari must wear only one set

**Second Janivaara** - represents Gruhastashrama Yogyata siddhyartham – for a Gruhastashrami

**Third Janivaara** – For uttareeyartham (Those who are having Jeevan pitru or Jyesta Bratru need not wear uttareeya. They are the uttareeyam for him)

**Fourth Janivaara** - additional janivara for Daana to others in case of exigencies.