



Yajñavalkya Smṛti

Dharma Teachings of Yajñavalkya

(Abridged by U.Ve. Srirama Ramanujachari)

Yajñavalkya is a famous personality in Indian Literature. He is said to have been a sage present in the court of King Janaka of Mithila. He is also mentioned in the Mahabharata. His name is closely connected with the Sukla-Yajurveda. Some hold that the Vajasaneyi Samhita of the Sukla Yajur Veda is known after his surname Vajasaneya. This Smṛti or code of sacred law is also known after his name Yajñavalkya. This Smṛti seems to be later than Manu-Smṛti but is widely acknowledged as an authoritative Code of Hindu Law. The interpretation of the Mitakshara commentary by Vijñanesvara on this Smṛti, is readily accepted by Indian Law Courts.

Chapter 1

Maheshvara said:

1. O Hari, the destroyer of Kesin, how was Dharma expounded by Yajñavalkya formerly. Please explain to me exactly as it is, O Madhava.

Hari said :

2. After making obeisance to Yajñavalkya who was staying in Mithila, the sages asked him about the various duties of different castes. With due meditation on Vishnu the sage of controlled senses expounded the same to them.

Yajñavalkya said:

3 — 6. The Dharma expounded hereafter is current in that country where the black deer roam about fearlessly. The Vedas in addition to Puranas, Nyaya, Mimamsa, Dharma Shastra, etc. are the basic lore for all kinds of learning and virtue. They are fourteen in number. The expounders of law are Manu, Vishnu (Vishnu Dharma Shastra), Yama (Yama-Smṛti) Angiras (Angirasa-smṛti or Brhad-angirasa-smṛti), Vasistha (Vasistha-dharma-Shastra), Daksa, Samvarta, Satatapa (Author of several smṛti-works, Karma-vipaka), Parasara (Parasara-Smṛti), Apastamba (Apastamba-dharma-sutra) Ushanas (Aushanasa-dharma-sastra), Vyasa (Vyasa-siddhanta) Katyayana, Brihaspati, Gautama, [the brothers] Sankha & Likhita, Harita, and Atri (Atreya-dharma-Shastra). All these ever engaged in meditation of Vishnu have become expounders of law.

8. Altruism (*ijyacara*), control of mind (*dama*), non-violence (*ahimsa*), charity (*danam*), self-study (*svadhyaya*), work (*karma*), realisation of the Atman by means of Yoga (*yogena atma darshanam*) — all these are Dharmas.

Samskāras — Sacraments

10. The four castes are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. The first three are Dvijas (Twice born). The rites from *Niṣeka* (impregnation) to the funeral are performed with mantras.

11–12. The *Garbhadhāna* rite (conception) is performed after menstruation; *Pumsavana* rite before the moving of the child in the womb; *Sīmāntam* in the 6th or 8th month. Then the *Prasava* (delivery) and afterwards the *Jātakarman* (birth) and *Nāma-karaṇa* (naming) rites on the eleventh day. *Nishkramana* (first outing) in the 4th month. The *Annaprāśanam* (weaning) in the 6th month and *cūḍākarana* (shaving of the head) as per practice in the family.

13. Thus is the seed of negative actions which is generated along with conception nullified. For girls these sacraments are performed without reciting the mantras but marriage is performed with mantras.

Chapter 2

Yajñavalkya said:

2. After duly investing the disciple with the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*) the preceptor shall teach him the Vedas along with the Mahā-vyāhrtis, and instruct him in the rules of purity and right conduct.

Ablutions

3. He shall urinate and defecate with the sacred thread twisted round his right ear facing the north during the day or at the Sandhya i.e. dawn, midday and dusk and facing the south if it is during the night.

4. The brahmin or others strictly adhering to the sacred rites shall hold the penis and stand up and wash it with earth and water till the bad smell and stickiness are removed.

5. He shall sit on a clean ground facing north or east and perform the sipping of water (*ācamanam*) from the Brahma-tirtha.

7. He shall perform ācamana thrice and *Unmarjana* (wiping off) twice. He shall touch the mouth and other parts of the body etc. The water shall be undisturbed and free from bubbles.

This rite is called anga sparsa and consists of reciting the 12 names of Vishnu while touching certain parts of the body.

Daily Rituals

9. Bath, sprinkling with the sacred mantras, [Sandhyā Vandana consisting of] Prāṇāyama (breath control), Suryopasthāna (worship of the sun) and Gāyatri japa shall be performed every day.

11. The purity of Prāṇāyama is in the three Riks that constitute the mantra and its deity. In the evening the Gāyatrī shall be recited squatting down till the rise of stars.

12. In the morning the Gāyatrī shall be recited standing facing the east till the sun rises. Thereafter both in the morning and evening oblations should be offered in the sacred fire.

17. After making the offerings to the sacred fire he shall take his food with the permission of the preceptor, duly taking in water in the ritualistic way. He shall never criticise the food served.

18. A student observing Brahmācārya shall take varieties of food judiciously. At the time of a Sradha, a student can eat as he pleases but without prejudice to his Vrata. He shall avoid wine and meat and steam cooked food, etc.

19. He is called a *guru* who makes him do all rites and teaches him Veda. He is an *ācārya* who initiates him with the investiture of sacred thread. He who teaches a portion of Vedas is *Upadhyāya*. The performer of sacrifice is called *Rtvik*. All these people are to be duly honoured but one's own mother is superior to all these.

30. By the regular study of different portions in the Vedas dealing with the diverse sacrifices the fruits thereof are obtained. The twice-born will reap the fruits of gifts of land and penances by study alone.

Chapter 3

Marriage

Yajñavalkya said:

1 – 3. O sages, listen to the various duties of the house- holder. After giving fees to the preceptor and taking the ritualistic bath with his permission and concluding his student stage he shall marry a girl endowed with good characteristics. She shall be a virgin, younger in age, not sickly, having brothers, not of the same rishi, lineage or Gotra, beyond the fifth remove on the mother's side, and the seventh remove on the father's and hence *asapinda* (unrelated).

Generally the Hindus trace their descent to a common male ancestor. Such a descent is called Gotra i.e clan. The prominent gotras were eight but they multiplied later on. "Gotra occurs several times in the Rig Veda in the account of the mythic exploits of Indra. Roth interprets the word as 'cow-shed'; while Geldner thinks that herd' is meant. The latter sense seems to explain best the employment which the term shows in the later literature as denoting the 'family' or 'clan', and which is found in the Chandogya Upanishad. Grhya Sutras stress is laid on the prohibition of marriage within a Gotra, or with a Sapinda of the mother of the bridegroom--that is to say, roughly, with agnates and cognates." (VINS p. 235-6).

7. There are many types of marriages among them; the **Brahma** type is that in which the bridegroom is invited and a girl bedecked according to capacity is given in marriage. A son born of that girl sanctifies twenty one generations on either side.

8. The **Daiva** type of marriage is that in which the Rtvik in a sacrifice is chosen as the bridegroom. A son born of that wedlock sanctifies fourteen generations. If two cows taken along with the bride the type of marriage is **Arṣa**, the son born of that wedlock sanctifies six generations.

9. A marriage in which the exhortation, "both of you carry on your sacred duties together" is given, is called Sakama (with love) marriage. A son born of that wedlock sanctifies six generations including himself.

10. In the **āsura** form of marriage, money is taken; in the **Gandharva** marriage, mutual love and consent is the criterion; in the **Rāksasa** marriage, the bride is taken forcibly after a fight and

in the Paisāca marriage, the girl is drugged and married.

11. The first four types of marriage are recommended for brahmins; the Gandharva and the Raksasa type for kings; the Asura type for Vaishyas and the despicable last type for the Sudras.

13. The father, the grandfather, brother, a kinsman or the mother gives away the girl in marriage; the latter in case the former is not available.

14. A father not giving a daughter in marriage, incurs the sin of Bhruna-hatya (murder of the foetus) at every menstrual period. If no one gives her away in marriage, the girl is at liberty to choose her own lover.

15. A girl can be given in marriage only once; a person who abducts a girl should be punished like a thief; if an unsullied girl is forsaken he should be punished. A fallen girl should be forsaken at once.

16 – 17. For producing a son and a heir in the family the brother-in-law or a cousin or a person of the same clan can have intercourse with an issueless widow till she conceives. If he touches her after that he becomes degraded. The son born thus is the legitimate son of the deceased husband.

18. A wife found guilty of adultery shall be compelled to wear dirty garments, shall be given only a single morsel daily, shall be rebuked and forced to lie on the bare ground.

19. The moon god has blessed women with purity; Gandharva has blessed them with sweet speech. Fire is always pure and women are always pure.

20. If a woman subjects herself to abortion, except in the case of adultery and for purposes of expiation, she becomes guilty of two great sins the murder of the foetus and the murder of her husband.

21. A wife addicted to wine, suffering from incurable diseases or inimically inclined can be forsaken. A wife of sweet speech should be maintained. Otherwise, declare the sages, great sin will result.

22 — 23. If there is no discord or dispute between the husband and wife, virtue, love and wealth flourish there. If the wife survives the husband but remains unmarried, she is praised in the world. After death she becomes delighted with goddess Uma. If a man divorces a chaste virtuous woman he shall give her a third of her ornaments back.

24 — 26. The highest duty of a woman is to carry out the behests of her husband. Sixteen nights subsequent to the monthly menstrual flow are the nights of conception for women. The husband shall restrain himself during the parvan (full moon & new moon days) when the stars Magha and Mula are ascendant and on the first four nights. Thereafter, on even nights, he can have intercourse with her. Thereby, he will be able to beget a healthy son of auspicious traits. If the woman is in a mood to receive him on any night he should satisfy her remembering that lust in women is terrible.

27 — 28. The husband should be loyal to his wife. Since women are to be well protected the husband, his brothers, father, mother or kinsmen should honour her with ornaments, clothing and foodstuffs. The wife should be able to maintain the household with a modicum of requisite things. She should be skilful, pleased with the minimum and reluctant to spend lavishly.

29 —31. She should pay respects to her mother-in-law and father-in-law by touching their feet. A woman whose husband is away shall forsake sports, decoration of the body, attending festivities, boisterous laughter, visits to other people's house. During childhood the father shall protect the girl; during her youth the husband shall do so and during old age the son. If these are

not available, kinsmen shall protect her. Whether during day or during night, a woman shall not stay outside her house without her husband.

32— 33. Only the senior wife is entitled to take part in religious rites not the junior ones. If the wife had been of good conduct she should be cremated duly by the husband with Agnihotra rites. He can remarry duly for the preservation of Agnihotra. A woman who had been dutiful shall earn good name here and repair to heaven after death.

Chapter 4

Grihastha Dharma

Yajñavalkya said:

8—9. All rites laid down in the Vedas, except that of charitable gifts, shall also be performed in the marital fire, After answering the calls of nature and observing the requisite toilet and washing the teeth he should perform *Sandhyā* in the morning. After the fire sacrifice he should recite the Sūrya mantras with due faith.

10. He should study the meaning of Vedic passages and the various Shastras. He should go to the temple of God for the acquisition (*Yoga*) and preservation (*Kṣema*) of his desired objects.

11 — 13. After taking bath he should perform *Tarpana* and worship the gods and the manes. According to capacity he shall read Vedas, Puranas and Itihasas. In order to achieve the full result of Japas and Yajñas (sacrifice) meditation (*Vidya*), shall be practiced. Oblations, offerings to the ancestors, homa, study of Vedas and reception of guests should be duly observed. The great sacrifices for bhūtas, ancestors, gods and human beings shall be duly performed.

Hospitality

15 –16. Food shall not be cooked for one's own use exclusively. All children, elderly people, pregnant women, invalids and girls shall be duly fed and thereafter guests should be fed. Then the couple should partake of what is left over. With *Prāṇāgni-homa* (ritualistic taking in of a few grains) he should take his meal without finding fault with the food served.

17. Only after feeding the boys (disciples) should he take in moderate quantities wholesome food after due digestion. The earlier part of the meal and the later one should be taken after drinking water.

18. The food should be eaten in a secluded place. Charity should be given according to capacity to the guests and to people of all castes.

19. No such thought shall be entertained as ("This guest is not worthy of bowing to", "This is the same as that one" with regard to guests. Even by reducing other expenses, alms should be given to mendicants and persons of good practices.

20 — 22. Whoever happens to come [at the time of meals], should be fed. *Snātakas* (those who have completed their Vedic studies) preceptors, rulers, friends, boys eligible for marriage, persons in distress — all these shall be honoured and respected. All wayfarers are guests (*atithi*). A Srotriya is a person who has mastered the Vedas. These two (the guest and Vedic Scholar) should be honoured if a householder wishes to attain Brahmaloaka. A householder shall never yearn for another person's food unless invited and unless it is what is not censurable.

23. He shall avoid the misuse of speech, hands and feet and over-eating. When the guest and the Vedic Scholar are fully satiated he shall accompany them up to the boundary of the village.

Other daily activities

24 — 25. The remaining part of the day he shall spend in the company of good people, friends and relations. After performing the evening prayer, offering of ghee in the fire, etc., he should take food. Consulting the learned he should decide what is to be done for his own progress. He must get up in the *Brahma muhurta* (before sunrise). A brahmin should be honoured with money, gifts, etc.

26-27. To the aged, grief-stricken and burden-bearers he should be a support leading the way. The common duties of the twice-born, the brahmins, Vaishyas and Kshatriyas are sacrifice, study of the Vedas, charity, etc. The additional duties of a brahmin are acceptance of fees, presiding over sacrifices and teaching of the Vedas. The special duties of a Kshatriya are the administration of kingdom and the protection of the people.

29. The common qualities of everyone for the preservation of virtue constitute non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, purity, control of sense-organs, control of the mind, patience, straightforwardness, liberal-mindedness, equality and activities devoid of crookedness or deceit (roguery).

35. A brahmin never craves for wealth that would interfere with his daily study of the Vedas. He should not seek it from any and every place. If he is terribly oppressed by hunger he can seek money from a king, his pupil or a person of his clan. He should not earn by resorting to haughtiness, hypocrisy or cunning.

36. A householder should preferably wear a white cloth. Hair, moustache and nails shall he kept always clean. He should not take food unless supervised by his wife.

37. He should never speak unpleasant words. He should always be humble with the sacred thread on. While circumambulating the icons in a temple he should hold the holy staff and water pot.

38. He should never pass urine in riverbeds, shady groves, ashes, cowsheds, running water, facing fire, sun, moon, cows, water, women and brahmins, or at the evening hours.

39. He should never gaze at fire, sun, a nude woman, a woman engaged in a sexual act, wine, faeces, etc. He should never sleep with his head to the west.

40. He should never spit in water nor pour blood, urine, faeces or poison in water. Feet should not be shown to fire for warming, nor should be jump across fire.

41. He should not drink water from his cupped palms nor should be awaken a sleeping person. He should not gamble with dishonest gamblers nor should he share the bed with a sick person.

43. He should never pull a suckling cow, never enter a place except by the proper door. He should never accept fees from a miserly king decrying Scriptures.

Vedic Study

44--45. The annual Upakarma rite (Revising of Vedic study and expiatory rites) should be performed on the full moon day in the month of Sravana, on Hasta asterism or fifth day of the bright fortnight, or on Rohini asterism in the month of Pausha or on Astaka (7th, 8th or 9th) days. The Utsarga rite should be duly performed outside near a place where there is natural

water.

46. (There are thirty seven *Anadhyāya* days (Holidays for Vedic Study) when any one of these — a disciple, a preceptor, a kinsman or a Rtvik dies three days are Anadhyaya, so also after the Upakarma and Utsarga rites, when a Vedic scholar of one's own branch of Veda dies.

54. What is prohibited by the Vedas should not be performed. The preceptor's or king's shadow shall not be treaded on. Another man's wife should not be seduced. Blood, Faeces, urine, spit or vomited matter, etc. should not be treaded on.

Personal Behaviour

55. Brahmins, Serpents, Kṣatriyas and the Ātman should never be slighted. Leavings of food partaken, excreta, etc, should be kept far even from the extremity of the foot.

56. The acts enjoined by Vedas and Smrtis should be performed in faith. No one should be hit in the vulnerable parts. **No one should be censured or beaten. Only a son and a disciple can be beaten.**

57. All virtues should be practiced; nothing contrary to them. A householder should never dispute with his mother, father or a guest.

58. Without offering the five pindas he shall not take bath in another man's pond or well. A bath is better taken in a river, fountains and natural puddles and eddies.

59. The use of another man's bed and personal belongings should be avoided. Unless there is danger to life, food offered by a miser, enemy or a man without sacred fire should be refused.

Food and Eating

60-64. Food offered by these people should never be eaten:- a bamboo-worker, a calumniated person, a banker, a person acting as priest of prostitutes and their flock, physicians to the low class people, trans-genders, professional staggers of plays, cruel, fierce, fallen Vrātyas (uninitiated aryas), haughty people, persons partaking of other people's leavings after food, persons who misuse sacred texts, henpecked husbands, village priests, wicked kings, washermen, the ungrateful, executioners, liars, backbiters, publicans, bards, goldsmiths, etc. Meat should not be taken without consecration. Food mixed with hair or germs should not be taken. Food cooked more than twelve hours before, partaken by another, sniffed at by a dog, sprinkled over by a sinner, touched by a menstruating woman, squeezed or kneaded by others should be avoided. Insufficient food should also be avoided [or unlimited quantity of food should also be avoided]. Similarly, food sniffed at by a cow or a bird or trampled by anyone should be avoided.

66. Food cooked a day before can be taken if it has been seasoned with oil or ghee. No food prepared with wheat or barley should be taken after the lapse of a day unless it is fried in oil or ghee.

67. Milk of a camel, a single-hoofed animal (such as mare) and that of women should be avoided. The flesh of carnivorous animals, birds, Datyuha (gallinule), and parrots should be avoided.

68 — 71. After eating Sarasas, single hoofed animal's flesh, swans, cranes, storks, swallows, unconsecrated Krsaras, Samyavas, payasas [all puddings], Apupas, Saskulis (fried macaronis) the flesh of Kurara Jalapada, Khanjarita, Casa (Jay) and other birds; fish, red-footed animals,

the man should atone for the sin by fasting three days.

72. By eating garlic and onion one becomes sinful and an atonement one should perform Candrayana. If one takes meat after worshipping deities and manes in Sraddha one does not acquire sin.

73. If one kills animals otherwise (and eats their flesh) he will fall into hell and remain there for as many days as there are hairs on that animal. Eschewing flesh a devotee attains God Hari after due prayer.

Chapter 5

Purification

Yajñavalkya said:

1. O good Sirs, I shall now expound the process of cleaning articles. Articles such as gold, silver, pearls, Sankha, ropes, leather (?) seats (wooden) and vessels are cleaned with water.

2-3. The purification of sacrificial ladies is by hot water; that of grains by mere sprinkling; that of wooden and horn articles by paring and that of sacrificial vessel by scrubbing. Woollen or silken stuff is purified by a mixture of fresh cow's urine and hot water. Articles received as alms become pure when the mendicant sees his wife's face. A mud pot becomes pure by keeping it over fire.

7. A piece of flesh dropped down by a dog, a chandala or a carnivorous animal is naturally pure. The sun's rays, fire, the shadow of a goat or a cow, the ground all these are naturally pure.

8—10, After bath or a drink, after sneezing, sleep, taking food, traversing a street, and changing clothes one should perform Achamana twice. After sneezing, spitting, sleeping, shedding tears or changing clothes, if he does not perform achamana he should touch his right ear. Gods of fire, etc, stay in the right ear of a brahmin.

Chapter 6

Gifts & Giving

Yajñavalkya said:

1-2, I shall now expound the process of making gifts. Please listen, O noble sirs of excellent rites, Brahmins are superior to others and those who regularly observe rituals are still better. The person who has realised Brahman is superior to them. Know him to be the deserving person as he is endowed with penance. Cows, plots of land, gold, etc. should be given to deserving persons after duly honouring them.

3. A gift should never be taken by a person devoid of learning and austerity. By taking it he degrades the giver as well as himself.

4. Every day, gifts should be given to deserving persons particularly on festive or special occasions; when request is made, a gift should be given with reverence and according to one's ability.

10. A person who gives a cow free from sickness whether yielding milk or not, with or without the articles should be honoured in heaven.

11. The massaging of the feet of a weary wayfarer, nursing a sick person, worship of god, washing the feet of brahmins, and scrubbing the place where brahmins have taken food — all these are on a par with the gift of a cow.

14. The giver of the Vedas (in Manuscript) attains the region of Brahma not accessible even to the gods. Those who transcribe the Vedas with meanings, Yajñas Shastras, Dharma Shastras, on payment, also, attain the region of Brahma.

16 – 17. He who transcribes Itihasa (Epics – particularly the Mahabharata) or Puranas or makes a gift of them, attains merit equal to that of gifting Vedic text or even twice the fruit.

18. A twice-born shall never listen to materialistic discourses, false arguments, speeches in Prakrit (vernacular dialects) or foreign tongues, since these degrade him.

19. A deserving person who desists from accepting gifts attains the world of the giver of gifts. An offering of Kusha grass, water, vegetables, milk and fragrant unguents shall never be refused.

20. For the propitiation of gods or guests or the manes whatever one gets without solicitation should be accepted even from a man of evil deeds except a prostitute, an impotent person, a fallen man or an enemy.

Chapter 10

Vānaprastha Dharma

Yajñavalkya said:

1. O sages, I shall expound the [Dharma of] Vānaprastha (retiree). The person who wishes to take [to this vocation] shall go to the forest either alone or with his wife. If he goes alone he leaves his wife to the care of his son.

2. A Vanaprastha observes celibacy, fosters the sacred fire, exercises control over mind and sense-organs, is patient, honours brahmins who keep sacred fire as also the manes, deities and guests.

3. He shall gratify even the servants. He shall grow long hair, beard and moustaches. He shall be perfectly self-controlled. He shall take three baths a day. He should not accept money charities.

4. He shall continue Vedic studies. He shall regularly meditate. He shall be engaged in what is beneficent to all living beings. He shall attend to his personal needs once or twice a month.

5-6. He shall lie on the bare ground. He shall do every thing without worrying over the results. In summer he shall stand in the midst of five fires and in' the rainy season he shall lie on the bare ground. In the winter he shall wear wet clothes. During the day he shall perform Yogic Exercises. He shall not be angry with anyone. He shall be contented with himself.

Chapter 11

Sanyasa Dharma

Yajñavalkya said

1-2. I shall teach you the duties of monks. O noble sirs, please listen. After returning from the forest he shall first perform the sacrifice *Sarva-veda-pradakshina* and then the *prajapatya vrata*.

At the end of the rites he shall assimilate the fiery splendour in himself. He shall wish good for all living beings and be tranquil. Bearing three staffs and holding the water pot he shall resort to the village seeking alms and discard all physical labour for remuneration.

3. Without erring he shall continue seeking alms. He should not be seen in the evening along with other monks roaming about in the village, or he may do simple journeys without being ever ambitious.

4. He should become a *Paramahansa* (great saint) with a single staff and self control. When he finally achieves the yogic accomplishment and sheds the mortal body he will attain immortality.

5. By a regular practice of yogic exercises and taking food in small quantities he will have the great achievement. A generous person, a person fond of [honouring] guests, a householder who performs Sraddha and knower (Jñānin) becomes liberated.

Chapter 13

Degradation and Rectification

Yajñavalkya said :

1. A person is degraded when he fails to do what he is enjoined to do and does what is forbidden and also by not restraining his sense organs.

2. Hence expiatory acts have to be performed with great care; for purification. Thereby his conscience becomes clear and the world he attains becomes pure.

7 — 8. Decrying Vedas and despising preceptors are equivalent to the sin of murdering a brahmin in gravity. Taking food prohibited, low and base acts, and drinking the honey off the lips of a maiden in her monthly course are all akin to drinking of wine. Stealing of a horse is on a par with stealing of gold.

9. Coitus with a friend's wife, a virgin, a woman of a low caste, a woman of the same clan or one who gave birth to oneself — all these are sins akin to defiling of preceptor's wife.

10 — 12. Illegitimate sex with father's sister, mother's sister, aunt, one's own sister, mother's co-wife, her sister, preceptor's daughter and preceptor's wife and one's own daughter — all these, are on a par with defiling preceptor's bed.

13 — 20. There are many *Upapātakas* (minor sins and turpitude). They are:— slaughtering of a cow, stealing a brahmin's personal effects, non payment of debts, not maintaining sacred fires, trading, the younger brother's marrying when the elder sibling is still single (*parivedana*), abetment of *Parivedana*, giving the post of the presiding priest in a sacrifice to a man guilty of *Parivedana*, giving one's daughter to such a man, learning from a servant, teaching a superior, adultery, usury, sale of salt, contemptuous livelihood, misappropriation of a deposit, breaking of a vow, sale of meat, sale of a cow, abandonment of father, mother or a friend, sale of tanks and parks, selling of daughter's ornaments, crookedness, causing others to break their vow, selfish ventures, cohabitation with an alcoholic, forsaking of one's study of Vedas, sacred fires, child, and kinsmen, perusal of illegal and unholy literature, selling of oneself or one's own wife, all these are *Upapātakas*.

Now know the process of atonement.

23—25. The man guilty of abortion shall perform the Vrata "*Trayi-nishudana*" according to the caste of the foetus killed. If a brahmin engaged in Savana is the victim of an attempted murder

the would-be slayer should perform the Vrata twice. The expiatory rite for drinking wine is the drinking of red hot wine, ghee water and cow's urine. If the man does not die by drinking the hot liquid he shall perform the expiatory rite of a brahmin-slayer wearing barks of trees and matted hair, he now becomes pure. But he must have all brahminical sacraments performed all over again.

26. A brahmin woman addicted to wine should similarly [perform expiatory rite] by consuming semen, cow's dung and urine, Otherwise, she becomes fallen from husband's world (*Patiloka*) and is born as a vulture, pig or bitch.

28 — 29. If a man rapes a woman sleeping in her own bed, his penis and scrotum should be cut off and thrown in the south west quarter.

30. The wicked defiler of the preceptor's bed should perform the Prajapatya Krcchra Vratas or the Candrayana Vrata or should read Veda Samhita for three months.

32. Expiation for all Upapātakas is by Candrayana Vrata. Or he should live on milk alone for a month or perform Paraka (Twelve days' fast) rite.

37-38. For felling and cutting down trees, hedges and creepers the expiation is the recital of a hundred Riks. A Brahmācarin embracing a woman will become the breaker of vows. If he touches an ass he should recite a Nairrta mantra. For the sin of taking wine and meat the rites of Krcchra Sesa shall be performed.

39. If the disciple dies running an errand the preceptor should perform the Krcchra rite. If the disciple acts, contrary to the interests of the preceptor, he should propitiate him and crave forgiveness. He will be free from sin.

40. **If the enemy is wounded he shall be taken care of by giving food and affectionate treatment.** If a brahmin dies when being treated there is no sin.

48. Wilful abortion and hatred of the husband are great sins in women without any expiation. Hence, she shall be shunned from a distance.

49. If the guilt has become public the expiation shall be done as prescribed by the preceptor, in public view. If it is not publicised the Vrata shall be performed secretly.

52. An alcoholic or a stealer of gold shall remain standing in water reciting "Rudra" mantras and shall afterwards perform Homa with ghee with the "Kusmanda" mantras and observe fast for three days.

54. To expiate for any sin committed, one shall perform Pranayama a hundred times.

55. By unwittingly swallowing faeces, semen and wine a brahmin incurs impurity, which shall be wiped off by fasting for the day and drinking water in the evening with Omkara.

56. O Brahmins, the destruction of all sins inadvertently committed is possible when Sandhya prayers are offered thrice in the day. All sins are dispelled if Rudra mantra is recited eleven times.

57. No sin defiles a brahmin regularly studying Vedas and performing the five sacrifices. Excepting the sin of slaying a brahmin all sins are removed by reciting Gayatri, a thousand times.

58. The *Yamas* (restraints) are:— Celibacy, compassion, patience, meditation, truthfulness, contentment, non-violence, non-stealing, gentleness, and mental control.

59. The *Niyamas* (observances):— are bathing, silence, fasting, sacrifices, Vedic study, control of sense organs, austerity, non-aggression, devotion to the preceptor, and physical purity.

Penances

60. O Brahmins, the *Pancagavya* consists of cow's milk, ghee, curd, urine and dung. The expiator should swallow these and fast for the next day. This is called *Santapana Krcchra*.
63. Boiled milk, water, curd — either of these is taken every day and fasting for the night. This is the holy *Tapta-krcchra*.
64. One unsolicited morsel one night, and fast for the next — This is called *Pada-krcchra*.
65. Any of the above practised three times is called *Prajapatya*. If one takes only a palmful of water along with the previous, it is called *Ati-krcchra*.
66. *Krcchra* and *Ati-krcchra* alternatively for twenty one days and fast for twelve days — This is called *Paraka*.
67. One morsel of *Pinyaka* (oil cake), whey, and powdered barley is taken one day and fasting for the next — This is called *Krcchra-sama*.
68. The rite for fifteen days when each one of the *Krcchras* mentioned above is practised for three days, is called *Tula-purusha*.
69. In the bright half of the lunar month on the first day, a morsel of food of the size of a peacock's egg is taken; on the second day two morsels are taken. Thus the number is increased up to fifteen. In the dark half the number is gradually reduced. This is called *Candrayana*.
70. Another type of *Candrayana* is taking in two hundred and forty morsels of food in the course of a month without any stipulation on the number for any day.
71. This *Pinda Candrayana* is to be performed after *Trisavana-snana* (plunging into water for three times). *Gayatri* mantra shall be repeated over the *pindas*.
- 72 — 73. In sins known or unknown there is purification by *Candrayana*. Those who practise this only for the sake of virtue attain to *Candraloka*. Those who practise *Krcchra* similarly attain great prosperity.

Chapter 14

Preta-Asaucha, Cremation & Mourning

Yajñavalkya said:

1. O noble Sirs, I shall now describe the *Preta-asaucha*, i.e. the obsequies and the impurity subsequent to the death of persons. If a child who has not completed its two years dies, the corpse is simply buried (not cremated). No *Udaka* rites (offering of water, etc.) in that case.
2. The corpse shall be borne up to the cremation ground by kinsmen reciting *Yama Sukta*. For ordinary men ordinary fire may be used. If the dead man is an *Ahitagni* (person regularly maintaining sacred fires) the same shall be used for cremation.
3. Kinsmen up to the seventh or tenth degree shall perform *Udaka-kriya* (water-libation) facing the south and reciting the mantra *apa nah shosucadagham* (RV. 1.97.1), etc.
4. The *Udaka-kriya* for maternal grandfather, preceptor and one's own wife is also the same. In the case of sons, friends, sister's sons, father-in-law (all being brahmins) the water is offered

once proclaiming the name of the dead man and his Gotra but otherwise remaining silent.

5. No water-libation is made to the heretics, sinful persons, Vrātyas (persons not duly invested with sacred thread, etc.) Brahmacarins, and unfaithful wives.

6. Those addicted to alcohol and those who had committed suicide need not be honoured with the water libation or observation of *Asauca*. A dead man shall not be bewailed after the water-libation. Indeed, the existence of all living beings in the world is impermanent.

7 — 8. All [cremation] rites are to be performed up to the utmost extent of one's ability. Thereafter, they shall proceed homeward. At the door of the stallion, torn leaves of the Nimba tree (*margosa Azadirachta indica*) shall be strewn. They shall step slowly on a rock first and perform ācamana and touch fire, water, cow dung and white mustard seeds before entering the house formally.

9. Those who have touched the corpse must purify themselves by these rites and the final formal entry into the house. Those who had merely witnessed the rites do not require any formal purificatory rites. They are pure at the close of the rites. Others become pure after bath. They should remain celibate for the next three days.

10. There should be no cooking of food in the house. They shall take food bought or received from others. They shall sleep on the ground away from one another. To the departed one a rice-ball (Pinda) is given for three days.

11. Milk and water should be kept in a mud pot out in the open. Sacrificial rites enjoined by the Vedas should also be performed.

12. If a child dies before cutting its first tooth there is no impurity; if a child dies before the tonsure (cutting of the forelocks) rite is performed, the impurity is for a night only; if a child dies before the sacred thread investiture, the impurity is for three days; thereafter the impurity lasts for ten days.

13. In brief, the impurity due to death lasts for three or ten days. If two children die not two years old, the impurity is for the mother alone. If two impurities due to birth and death overlap, at the close of the latter, everyone becomes pure.

14. The impurity due to death has to be observed by the four castes for ten days, twelve days, fifteen days and thirty days respectively.

15 — 16. If a girl dies before being given in marriage or a son, a preceptor, a disciple, person continuing Vedic studies, an uncle, a Vedic Scholar, a son not one's own but of the wife who has had intercourse with others, or if an unpopular king dies, the impurity is for a day only.

17. There is no impurity at all on the death due to judicial execution, attack of a cow or a brahmin or due to suicide in secret, or due to poison.

18 — 20. On the death of a sacrificer, a person performing Vratas, Brahmacarins, donors and those who have realised Brahman there is no impurity. In the case of those who die at the time of charity, marriage, sacrifice, battle, civic commotion or any other calamity there is no impurity at all. Lapse of time, rites in fire, lump of clay, wind, mind, knowledge austerities, recital of prayers, repentance, fasting — all these are agents for purification. Charity purifies a person committing an unworthy act and the current itself purifies the river.

Professions

21 — 23. In cases of emergency a brahmin shall pursue a Kshatriya's duties (administration and security) or a Vaishya's mercantile activities. But these articles he shall not sell:— fruits, soma, silk, medicinal creepers, curd, milk, ghee, water, sesame seeds, cooked rice, heavy metals, acids and alkalis, honey, lac, requisites of Homa, cloth, stone, utensils, flowers, vegetables, clay, leather shoes, deer-skin, silk, salt, meat, oil cakes, roots and perfumes. If it is for the purpose of religious observances, some of the articles mentioned above can be sold along with sesame seeds and grains.

24. Even in dire necessity a brahmin should not sell the above mentioned articles. He should rather pursue cultivation. Horses should never be sold.

