

## **Sacrament Upnayan**

**UP+NAYAN= UPNAYAN.** UP means near and NAYAN means to bring.

When parents take a child to a teacher or an Acharya in Gurukul settings it is called Upnayan for a child.

Upnayan Sacrament is performed in a Gurukul or in the house of parents before a child starts education. After Upnayan Sacrament the child undertakes the long journey ahead to be Twice Born (Dwij). On first occasion the child takes birth from the womb of his/her mother and second time the child takes birth from the womb of his/her teachers after completion of education.

Upnayan Sacrament is basically a Sacrament to get a child started on the path of education so that he/she can become twice born (Dwij) in his/her life.

The child is invested with sacred Yagyopaveet (Janeu) consisting of three threads and preached that he/she should always pay respect and revere Almighty God, his/her parents and teachers. This is the basic meaning of wearing a Yagyopaveet (Janeu) consisting of three threads. In this Sacrament the child is explained the meaning of Gayatri Mantra in detail because in this particular Mantra one prays to Almighty God, life giver, remover of pains and sorrows, bestower of comforts and happiness, Thou are creator of universe and worthy of worship. O illuminator of our souls, we meditate Thy glory. O Gracious Lord lead our intellect to the noble path.

**AACHAARYA UPNAYAMAANO BRAHMACHAARINAM KRINUTE  
GARBHMANTAH..**

**TAM TAATRIISTISRA UDARE VIBHARTI TAM JAATAM  
TRASHTUMABHISANYANTI DEVAAH. . ATHRVA VEDA-11.5.3**

In the above Mantra it is said that as a mother looks after child in her womb when pregnant similarly after Upnayan Sacrament a Acharya (teacher) looks after a student (pupil) with the same due care as a mother till the child completes his/her education under that teacher/teachers.

**Time for Upnayan Sacrament-** According to aashvalaayan Grih Suro (1/19/1-6) Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati wrote that a Child born in a Brahman family should have Upnayan Sacrament at the age of eight years, Kshatriya family child at age of eleven years and Vaishya family child at the age of twelve years. He also wrote that a child born in a Brahman family must have this sacrament before the age of sixteen years, Kshatriya family before the age of twenty two years and Vaishya family before the age of twenty four years otherwise they would have fallen away from their duties.

**BRAHMAVARCH SAKAAMASYA KAARYA VIPRASYA PANCHAME.  
RAAGYO BALAARTHINAH VAISHYASYEHAARTHINOASHTAME.  
MANUSMRITI 2/37**

According to above Shlok of Manusmriti the child of a Brahmana whose parents wish their child to learn and gain knowledge early and the child is intelligent and capable to learn

should be invested with Yagyopaveet (Sacred thread Janeu) in the fifth year of his/her age, the child of a Kshatriya in the sixth year of age from the date of birth and the child of Vaishya in the eighth year of age.

But in modern age when the children become very active mentally and possess grasping power at early age parents should consider performing Upnayan Sacrament at an early age.

**Now we will describe the practical aspects of this Sacrament.**

**1. Drinking Milk, eating Daliya or Shreekhand** - Three days or a day before this Sacrament the child of a Brahman family should drink only milk, child of Kshtriya eats Daliya and child of Vaishya family should eat Shreekhand only.

**“PAYOVRATOBRAAHMANOO YAVAAGUVRATO RAJANYA  
AAMICHA AVRATOVAISHYA”.**

Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati has written that children can eat their allotted food as and when they feel hungry. All above three food items are nutritious. Milk denotes righteousness, Daliya exemplifies passion and excitement and Shreekhand signifies tastefulness. From such a description we can infer that naturally a Brahman is endowed with the quality of purity and goodness, a Kshtriya is full of passion, rage and princely habits and a Vaishya mainly likes tasty food and comforts of life.

**2. Practicality of Upnayan Sacrament** - The meaning of Upnayan has already been explained in the beginning. A student goes to a teacher in order to get educated, increase his/her knowledge, strength and intelligence.

**“BRAHMACHARYAMMGAMA BRAHMACHARYASAANI” PAA.GRIH.2.2.6**

O Almighty God I have come in your shelter for education in Celibacy and dedicate my life for learning under your guidance. Please bless me. Then Acharya gets the child appropriately dressed and while reciting appropriate Mantras, as written below, invests the child with a Yagyopaveet.

**“OM YAGYOPAVEETAM PARAM PAVITRAM PRAJAAPATERYATSAAHAJAM  
PURASTAAT. AAYUSHYAMAGYAM PRATIMUNCHA SHUBHAM  
YAGYOPAVEETAM BALAMASTU TEJAH. PAA.GRIH.SU. 2.2.11**

This means - Yagyopaveet is most sacred thread. Yagyopaveet has come in

to existence with the Almighty God. This provides you with long life, power and brilliance. This always signifies purity.

By reciting these sermons Acharya invests Yagyopaveet on the left side of the neck and then below the right shoulder of child.

**The three threads of Yagyopaveet always inspire and remind the child to respect and remember Almighty God, parents and teachers in his/her life.**

**3. To take vow to fulfil resolutions-** By reciting certain Mantras the

bachelor takes vows in names of Fire, Air, Sun, Moon and Almighty God to fulfil and be able to complete his/her celibacy period with success. He/she recites “Tachchkeyam” Mantra five times in order to make his/her resolve stronger. By reciting “**Idamahamanritaata Satyamupaimi**” he/she vows to speak truth and avoid telling lies. Here Acharya faces eastward and prays for progress and development in life of child.

Here the meaning behind Acharya facing east while praying is so that the child (pupil) shines like Sun and be intelligent and progressive and successful in his/her life. “**Arishtaah Sanchremahi**” - Meaning- Both Acharya (teacher) and pupil should walk in clean environment with mutual affection and resolve to follow non violence and development in life.

4. **To pour hand full of water on earth** - Acharya fills up Anjali (the cup shaped hollow formed by joining the two palms together) of the child with water from his Anjali. Then Acharya instructs the child to pour down the water on earth while reciting the following Mantra.

**“ Om Devasya Twaa Savituh Prasaveashvinorbaahubhyaam Pushnohastabhyaam Hastam Grihaamyaso”.** Aashva.Grih.Su.A.1. Kam.20.Su.4 Ya.A.5.mam.26

This act signifies that Child will get all the necessary education from Acharya and then he/she will roam around in this world to propagate this

knowledge for the benefit of human kind. This education and knowledge will help the child in living his/her own life in this world.

5. **To see Sun and circumabulate the Acharya** - The child looks at Sun and then walks around Acharya. By doing this ritual the child is trying to say to Acharya that he/she will protect his/her teacher from outside world, serve and respect his /her teacher and will learn all the education, knowledge, body strength and brilliance of his/her teacher.

6. **Touching of body organs-** With all the happiness Acharya touches the shoulder, abdomen and heart region of his/her pupil and blesses the child and tries to instil his/her spiritual thinking, kindness and other virtues in to the child. After this act the child becomes very grateful to Acharya. Here Acharya (teacher) takes a vow that with help of all education, knowledge and skills at his/her command he/she will create an ideal pupil. In the very first meeting both pupil and teacher create a pure and strong bond between them. Over the time this bond gradually becomes stronger and helps in reaching the goal. Like a mother Acharya (teacher) guides his/her pupil on a bright path and gives all the necessary knowledge which helps the child to live a healthy and happy life in a society in future. As a mother teaches her child about all her way of life, behaviour and Sacraments similarly a teacher behaves with his/her pupil. This is why a teacher is also called second mother of child.

7. **Girls have right for Upnayan and Vedaarambh Sacraments-**

Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati desired girls to get full education and become learned persons in Vedas after getting sacramented with Upnayan Sacrament. After Upanayan Sacrament a girl, living a life of celibacy, gets full right for education. In “Satyarth Prakash” Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati has written that a girl while living a life of celibacy should complete her education fully and then marry a young man afterwards at an opportune time.

### **“ Brahmacharyen Kanyaa Yuvaanam Vindate Patim.” Atharva Veda 11.2.4.3**

This Mantra tells about education and marriage of a girl. Similarly in Shraut Sutra it is written as “Imam Mantram Patni Pathet.” meaning that this Mantra should be recited by wife. This will be only possible if a woman is educated.

In Yajurveda a woman is called “Stoma Prishthaa.” which means A woman should be chief and presiding over a Yajna. Without Upnayan Sacrament and wearing Yagyopaveet a woman will never qualify to preside over and be a chief of Yajna. The whole context is about educating and making women an excellent members of a society.

**It is on basis of these teachings of Vedas Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj movement, tried to correct the distorted image of society and gave equal rights to girls and boys in society regarding education, Sacraments, basic rights, status and importance. Due to invasion of other religions in India in nineteenth century the respect for women in Indian society had virtually disappeared. Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati worked hard and fought for respect and value of women in society and to abolish childhood marriages and remarriage of young age widows.**

Note- it is worth knowing here that there is mention of this Sacrament in other religions as well. In Parsis this sacrament is called Kusti. In Muslims it is known as Bismillah Pathna. In this children are instructed to read “Bismillah Irrahman irrahim.” Like in Vedic Dharma children are taught to recite Gayatri Mantra. Christians call it Baptism. In Greek language it means “Punrutpati”. This word is similar to Vedic word Dwij. A child becomes twice born only after Upnayan Sacrament.