



## A REVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCES OF CHILD BIRTH FROM VEDAS AND OTHER SCRIPTURES

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### Abstract

The ancient Indian cognitive constructs pertaining to children and adolescents exhibit a striking resemblance to their contemporary modern counterparts. The ancient ideologies were founded upon a profoundly optimistic perspective regarding the progression of children's growth, scholastic pursuits, and eventual self-sufficiency, as well as the pivotal role and societal impact of adults. The concept of procreation and the subsequent cherishing of offspring has long been held in high regard within societal norms. The youthful progeny was systematically classified into four distinct varnas, predicated upon their cognitive acumen, proficiencies, commendable qualities, and innate propensities. Subsequently, they were imparted education commensurate with their respective classifications, in the seclusion of Gurukuls, far removed from their familial abodes. They possessed an inherent entitlement to receive education on a global scale. Females were afforded commensurate levels of attention as their male counterparts. The male offspring were anticipated to procure their sustenance, whereas the female offspring were anticipated to assume the role of domestic caretakers. The culmination of the educational journey and the subsequent return to one's abode symbolized the liberation from the transitional phase of adolescence. The well-being of children's physical and mental health, as well as the associated disorders, has been duly acknowledged and addressed. The etiology and treatment of physical and mental disorders were aligned with the prevailing scientific advancements of the respective eras.

**Keywords:** Vedas, Child Birth, Adolescence, Shodasa Sanskara, Garbhadhan Sanskara

### INTRODUCTION

Within the confines of this article, the term "mental concepts" pertains to the cognitive constructs encompassing perspectives, cognitions, or dispositions pertaining to a particular subject matter. In the context of this discourse, the aforementioned subject matter pertains to the demographic of individuals commonly referred to as children and adolescents, henceforth referred to as children unless explicitly specified otherwise. The cognitive construct may also encompass diverse facets pertaining to the formative stages of human development, namely childhood and adolescence (henceforth referred to as childhood, unless otherwise specified). As an illustration, the cognitive exploration of childhood encompasses the intricate processes of conception, parturition, as well as the intricate maturation of both the corporeal and psychological faculties. Furthermore, the

pedagogical journey, familial and societal positioning, disciplinary measures, legal frameworks, entitlements, and the multifaceted realm of physical and psychological ailments, along with their corresponding therapeutic interventions, all constitute the vast array of mental constructs that can be examined. When we refer to "Indian," we are specifically alluding to individuals hailing from or residing within the Indian sub-continent, taking into account the dynamic nature of India's political boundaries over the course of history. In the contemporary era, this would entail a multitude of nations. Furthermore, it is imperative that we consider the establishment of a reference point, encompassing a vast temporal spectrum ranging from antiquity to the present era. Throughout the course of history, the vast and diverse land of India has been inhabited by a multitude of individuals hailing from various backgrounds, residing in distinct geographical landscapes, and embracing a wide array of cultural traditions. For instance, the indigenous communities residing in the northeastern region of India exhibit distinct cultural characteristics when compared to the tribal populations inhabiting the central regions of the country or the remote Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The cognitive processes and dispositions of individuals may exhibit notable disparities. A substantial segment of the Indian populace has resided within rural communities, yet this paradigm is undergoing a rapid transformation. In the vast and diverse nation of India, one encounters a rich tapestry of linguistic and religious diversity among its populace. Religion possesses the capacity to encompass and subsequently influence cognitive constructs pertaining to offspring. The religious traditions of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism can be traced back to their origins in the ancient land of India. The religions of Islam, Christianity, and Parsee, which have their origins beyond the borders of India, have potentially exerted a discernible impact on the cognitive constructs pertaining to childhood within their respective followers. From a political standpoint, it is worth noting that the India we currently recognise is a relatively nascent development in history. India remained under the yoke of British colonial rule until the year 1947. India has experienced profound and expeditious transformations in its socio-cultural and economic landscape subsequent to its attainment of independence. The augmentation of Western influence upon Indian culture, sciences, and literature has exhibited a persistent trajectory of growth subsequent to the attainment of independence. The Indian cognitive frameworks pertaining to children within the aforementioned diverse contexts may exhibit variances. Moreover, it is imperative to acknowledge that the prevailing cognitive frameworks in modern India cannot be unequivocally deemed as purely indigenous, owing to the substantial impact of Western ideologies. One must acknowledge the prevailing issue of the dearth of Indian literary works pertaining to this particular subject matter. The authors are currently unaware of any research conducted in India that explores the conceptualization of children and the subsequent evolution of these concepts within the aforementioned contexts. Therefore, it is exceedingly arduous to adequately address all the aforementioned facets pertaining to the Indian notions of childhood within the confines of this article.

Henceforth, we have resolved to exercise discernment in our choices. In our pursuit of knowledge acquisition, we have judiciously selected Manusmriti,[1] a venerable Hindu scripture believed to have originated between the periods of 1500 BC and 500 AD, to serve as an authentic indigenous repository of insights pertaining to the intricate tapestry of Indian mental concepts of children (IMCC). It is imperative to acknowledge that the "Vedas" hold the distinction of being the most ancient and authoritative texts within the Vedic corpus. Various Hindu scriptures make reference to the venerable Vedas as a means to substantiate and fortify their respective perspectives. The Manusmriti, likewise, espouses a similar ideology. Furthermore, an extensive utilisation of Hindu texts, encompassing medical literature, originating from diverse origins, has been employed to compile and assimilate these profound notions. Hinduism has been chosen as a religious belief system due to its profound antiquity and indigenous origins. The concepts derived from Manusmriti, namely IMCC, are of ancient origin and therefore cannot be deemed as contemporaneous notions. A succinct allusion has likewise been rendered to the antiquated concept of IMCC (Intentional Mental Content Control) within the philosophical and spiritual traditions of Jainism and Buddhism.

As is inherent to the study of history, the profound import of ancient Indian Metaphysics, Cosmology, and Consciousness lies in its capacity to illuminate our comprehension of contemporary Indian ideologies, elucidating their development and unbroken lineage from their ancient origins.

### **CHILDREN IN MANUSMRITI**

According to the Manusmriti, it is stipulated that a total of sixteen "sanskars" or "shodasa sanskara," denoting the requisite rituals, ought to be performed for individuals of the human species. The practise of Sanskars, encompassing various stages from conception to death, is advocated due to its perceived benefits for both present and subsequent lifetimes. Among this collection, there exist a total of twelve literary works that are specifically tailored for the younger demographic. These pieces of literature encompass a vast expanse of time, commencing from the very inception of life, traversing through the stages of conception, pregnancy, birth, and subsequently delving into the realms of childhood, adolescence, and ultimately culminating in the transition into adulthood. The concept of "sanskars" not only serves to imbue a child with virtuous qualities, but also serves as a means to eradicate undesirable habits. These concepts are succinctly delineated as follows:

The concept of Garbhadhan Sanskara, as outlined in the Manusmriti, emphasises the importance of pre-conception behaviour for individuals aspiring to conceive a child. It suggests that adults should adhere to a prescribed set of conduct in order to increase the likelihood of conceiving a child who is endowed with good health. The allocation of veerya, colloquially referred to as sperm, must be administered with due diligence in order to facilitate the process of fertilisation.

Punsavan, a ritualistic practise, is traditionally observed upon the manifestation of signs indicating the commencement of pregnancy or during the second or third month of the antenatal period.

Seemantonnayan, a practise undertaken during the fourth month of the antenatal period, is implemented with the noble objective of fostering stability within the developing foetus.

Jaatkarm, a customary practise performed shortly after birth, entails the administration of minute quantities of ghee, a clarified butter, and honey to the newborn prior to the severance of the umbilical cord.

Naamkaran, a customary practise, entails the bestowal of a name upon an infant on auspicious occasions such as the 10th or 12th day following their birth, or any other propitious day as deemed fit.

Nishkraman: The progeny is escorted beyond the confines of the domicile for a leisurely promenade amidst the invigorating atmosphere, commencing from the fourth lunar cycle or subsequent thereto.

Annprashan, also known as the first rice-eating ceremony, is a traditional practise where the child is nourished with delectable victuals comprising legumes and grains that are easily assimilated by the digestive system.

The practise of Mundan or Chudakarm involves the ceremonial act of shaving the head during either the first or third year after birth.

Upnayan, a sacred ritual, is performed during the auspicious occasion of escorting a child to his esteemed guru or "acharya," who graciously accepts the child into his esteemed Gurukul, a revered abode of learning. It is during this solemn ceremony that the child undergoes the sacramental rite of "yagyopaveet," symbolising his initiation into the realm of education and knowledge.

Vedaarambh: During the period of cohabitation with a learned mentor, the young individual acquires knowledge pertaining to the sacred texts known as the "vedas," as well as other forms of erudition that are characterised by their superior quality.

Keshant: The act of trimming one's hair during the nascent stages of pubescence or adolescence. Samavartan, a solemn ceremony, marks the culmination of one's educational journey, symbolising the transition of a young individual from the revered Gurukul to their familial abode. It signifies the culmination of the adolescent phase and the commencement of the nascent stage of early adulthood.

The pedagogical pursuit of young minds, the revered mentor, the diligent scholar, and the hierarchical social division.

It is imperative that the education of all children be prioritised, irrespective of their gender or familial background. The initial undertaking of this task is conducted within the confines of one's domestic abode, under the auspices of the familial unit. Subsequently, upon reaching a state of preparedness, the individual proceeds to partake in this endeavour at a Gurukul, under the tutelage of an esteemed aachaarya. In traditional educational settings, it is customary for male offspring to seek guidance from male gurus, known as aachaaryas, and attend Gurukuls, while their female counterparts are directed towards female aachaaryas and Gurukuls. It is a widely acknowledged fact that upon birth, all children are inherently devoid of education and the necessary cultural refinement, commonly referred to as "sanskars." Upon undergoing a comprehensive evaluation, receiving a formal education, and having their cognitive abilities scrutinised by the esteemed aachaarya, individuals are subsequently allocated a specific occupation or profession, commonly referred to as a "varna." Individuals who possess exceptional cognitive abilities and exhibit a propensity for advanced academic pursuits and the dissemination of knowledge are designated to the esteemed "brahman" varna. Individuals who possess exceptional physical strength, formidable power, and unwavering courage, coupled with a commendable display of valour, are designated as members of the "kshattriy" varna. Conversely, those who exhibit a remarkable aptitude for enhancing and accumulating resources are bestowed with the esteemed "vaishya" varna. Individuals who possess robust physical well-being, exemplary moral character, and an inherent proclivity towards altruistic endeavours, albeit devoid of any exceptional aptitudes, are designated as members of the shudra varna. The Shudra caste necessitates the provision of nurturing and safeguarding. It is imperative that all juveniles engage in the pursuit of knowledge through formal education. Education can be aptly described as "swaddhyay," a term that encompasses the pursuit of knowledge, the study of ancient scriptures such as the Vedas, the practise of "sandhyopasana" wherein one engages in prayer and meditation during the transitional periods of dawn and dusk, and the observance of "agnihotra," a ritualistic tradition involving the lighting of sacred fires. The Vedas are not imparted to individuals belonging to the shudra varna.

The act of seeking enlightenment from a revered guru or aachaarya and acquiring knowledge of the sacred vedas holds immense significance, to the extent that it is believed to grant an individual a metaphorical rebirth. This notion is rooted in the ancient Rigveda mantra 1/149/5, which proclaims "YAHE DWIJANAMA" - wherein "DWIJANAMA" signifies the second birth, distinct from the initial biological incarnation. The significance of this subsequent emergence is widely regarded as paramount, as it facilitates the attainment of "brahmagyan" via swaddhyay, the pinnacle of wisdom that liberates an individual from the anguish of the perpetual cycle of reincarnations. The process of biological birth merely bestows upon the human being a corporeal vessel, which ultimately succumbs to its mortal demise.

It is incumbent upon all parents to ensure the enrollment of their offspring in the esteemed Gurukul educational institutions under the guidance of learned gurus. Failure to comply with this directive carries the potential for retribution from the sovereign.

Parents may possess a predilection for a specific varna in relation to their offspring and subsequently bestow upon them a name that aligns with said preference. The Manusmriti provides guidance pertaining to the nomenclature of progeny belonging to the esteemed varnas of brahman, kshatriy, vaishya, and shudra, as well as those of the fairer sex. However, it is the esteemed guru who shall ultimately exercise discernment in determining the child's varna, taking into account their intellectual acumen, inherent attributes, commendable achievements, and innate proclivities. The varna system exhibits a notable degree of flexibility, as the allocation of varnas is not inherently fixed and immutable. In the event that an individual belonging to the dwij varnas, namely the brahman, kshatriy, or vaishya, exhibits conduct that is deemed unworthy, it is plausible for them to undergo a transformation into a state of being referred to as "patit," wherein they are considered to have fallen from their esteemed position and assumed the status of a shudra. It is plausible that a reversal of social status could occur, wherein an individual belonging to the Shudra caste, through the acquisition of knowledge and the performance of virtuous actions, may ascend to the esteemed position of a Brahman. Likewise, one may observe potential variations within the societal strata of bhraman, kshatriy, and vaishya varnas.

A juvenile deemed apt for the brahman varna is deemed prepared for the sacred initiation ceremony known as upnayan at the tender age of 8. Similarly, a child belonging to the kshatriy varna is considered eligible for this rite of passage at the age of 11, while a young individual hailing from the vaishya varna is deemed ready at the age of 12. Should the parents so desire, it is within their purview to initiate the child's educational journey at an earlier juncture, specifically at the tender ages of 5, 6, and 8. Conversely, should they opt for a more delayed commencement, the child may embark upon their scholastic endeavours no later than the ages of 16, 22, and 24, respectively. After reaching a certain age, the Upnayan ceremony ceases to be applicable, resulting in an individual being classified within the Shudra varna.

It is imperative that children, regardless of their socioeconomic status or familial background, be accorded equal treatment. It is imperative that each individual partakes in the fundamental activities of existence, such as sustaining oneself through nourishment, seeking rest through slumber, adorning oneself with garments, cleansing oneself through bathing, engaging in intellectual pursuits through study, engaging in spiritual contemplation through prayer, and comporting oneself in a manner consistent with societal norms. There exist explicit guidelines pertaining to this matter. A prescribed set of sartorial guidelines exists for individuals belonging to the esteemed social strata of brahmans, kshatriys, vaishyas, and shudras. It is imperative that individuals procure sustenance exclusively from designated origins, yet in the event that such sources are unattainable, there exists a provision for acquiring sustenance from alternative outlets. Males are compelled to beseech for sustenance. Females are not obligated to engage in the act of beseeching.

There exists a persistent emphasis on the virtue of cleanliness. The adherence to a customary daily regimen is strongly advocated. It is imperative that one ascends prior to the break of dawn. It is imperative to exhibit reverence towards sustenance, to experience and articulate elation during its consumption, and to exercise restraint in the act of indulgence. It is imperative to adhere to prescribed etiquette with utmost precision.

The prescribed guidelines for an individual practising "brahmachari" (or "brahmacharini" for the female counterpart) entail the imperative of exercising dominion over one's sensory faculties, commonly referred to as "jitendriy." This is due to the inherent susceptibility of "brahmacharya" to be compromised by the indulgence of a solitary sense. Sexual continence holds a position of paramount significance, as it is widely regarded as a virtue of utmost importance. Conversely, the state of incontinence is perceived as a malevolent force, capable of tarnishing and undermining the sacred practise of brahmcharya. It is often recommended to exercise caution in one's interactions with the opposite gender, as women possess the potential to exert a negative influence on a male scholar,

thereby compromising his commitment to celibacy and spiritual purity. It is imperative that he extend his respectful salutations to the esteemed educators, venerable seniors, wise elders, and erudite individuals. It would be prudent for him to execute the provision of their service. It is imperative that he engages in the ritual of cleansing oneself through bathing, ensuring a state of purity. Additionally, he should devoutly engage in prayer, while diligently practising the sacred rituals of sandhyopasana and agnihotra. Furthermore, he should ardently pursue the acquisition of knowledge by immersing himself in the study of the revered vedas. It is imperative that he partakes in solitary slumber and maintains a state of sexual continence. He ought to relinquish his attachment to various worldly possessions and emotions such as an umbrella, shoes, sexual desires, anger, greed, personal ambitions, fears, grief, jealousy, as well as any feelings of animosity and enmity. Furthermore, he should also consider abstaining from indulging in the pleasures of music, dance, and singing. In addition, it would be prudent for him to renounce the indulgence in wine, the consumption of meat, the application of fragrances, the adornment of necklaces, the ingestion of piquant and pungent fare, and the perpetration of harm upon all sentient creatures. One must refrain from engaging in the act of gambling, indulging in the act of speaking ill of fellow individuals, propagating falsehoods, engaging in prolonged gazes upon the fairer sex, inflicting harm upon others, seeking refuge in the assistance of others, and amassing material possessions, particularly in the form of sustenance.

In order to derive any semblance of advantage from the study of the Vedas, it is imperative for a brahmachari to maintain a state of immaculate purity. A pupil is deemed deserving of instruction if they possess intellectual acumen, exhibit amicability, and demonstrate aptitude for assimilating knowledge. Furthermore, their commitment to serving their mentor, possessing erudition, and disseminating it to others with sincerity and integrity are essential attributes. It is imperative that he possess the necessary financial means to fulfil his obligations in remunerating the guru, commonly referred to as gurudakshina, during the auspicious occasion of samavartan. Furthermore, it is incumbent upon him to contemplate and prioritise the well-being and prosperity of his fellow beings. It is imperative to impart knowledge and wisdom upon one's familial relations and kinsfolk. It is imperative for the student to possess a profound sense of intellectual curiosity. It is imperative that he exhibits a proclivity for inquisitiveness and a fervent thirst for knowledge. If an individual harbours a sincere desire for knowledge acquisition, despite their financial constraints, it is imperative that they be afforded the opportunity for instruction.

A guru is an individual who possesses profound wisdom regarding the Vedas and diligently imparts this erudition to their disciples. It is imperative that he possesses a commendable moral character. He is held in higher esteem than one's biological progenitor due to his profound ability to impart wisdom derived from the sacred texts known as the Vedas. The pupil must refrain from entertaining any dissenting notions in regards to his revered mentor.

According to the Manusmriti, it is prescribed that a student ought to pay homage to his revered guru. It is imperative that the location of Guru's Gurukul be situated at a considerable distance from both urban and rural settlements. A pupil may experience a sense of trepidation in the presence of their esteemed mentor. The act of a student saluting his esteemed guru, followed by the reciprocal gesture of the guru returning the salute and subsequently addressing the student, thereby inviting him to take a seat, potentially signifies a display of deference and respect within the context of their relationship. The esteemed guru then proceeds to request the diligent student to commence his scholarly pursuit. Upon obtaining the consent and guidance from a revered mentor, the diligent scholar commences his scholarly pursuits by uttering the sacred syllable "Om," a reverential invocation to the divine, thereby aligning his consciousness with his academic endeavours.

Education is bestowed with the utmost reverence, wherein even a juvenile endowed with erudition possesses the capacity to instruct their progenitors and paternal figures, thereby garnering a level of esteem surpassing that accorded to the latter. It is commonly posited that reverence ought to be

accorded to wisdom and erudition, rather than mere physical manifestations such as greying hair. An individual of erudition commands a higher degree of reverence than a sovereign ruler.

The aforementioned narrative regarding the ancient Hindu IMCC elucidates the longstanding reverence bestowed upon children within the Indian cultural milieu since time immemorial. They were sought after and regarded as the vanguards of the nation's forthcoming trajectory. Hence, the paramount significance was attributed to their state of robust health, intellectual acumen, refined comportment, altruistic tendencies, comprehensive education, and proficient aptitude. The individuals in question were entrusted with the responsibility of governing the societal affairs in a mature manner. Consequently, their educational pursuits, training endeavours, and social integration were aligned with the prevailing social framework and operational mechanisms, specifically referred to as varna "vyavastha" - a system of classification and arrangement. A society can be comprehended as necessitating the presence of an intelligentsia, individuals possessing advanced intellectual capabilities, warriors and protectors who safeguard the collective well-being, administrators who govern and manage affairs, businessmen who engage in commercial activities, craftsmen who exhibit skillful artistry, and service providers who cater to various needs. Henceforth, it became imperative to provide children with a comprehensive education and tailored instruction that aligns with their cognitive prowess, abilities, and inclinations. This aligns with the prevailing discourse on children, albeit with a notable departure from the traditional varna vyavastha. Presently, the responsibility of determining a child's vocation or occupation lies not with educators, but rather with the parents and the child themselves.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the assignment of varnas was not predicated upon hereditary or birth-based factors. The allocation of these tasks was predicated upon the child's cognitive prowess, disposition, commendable achievements, and innate abilities, as determined by the discerning educator, with the ultimate aim of facilitating the child's scholastic development, skill acquisition, and eventual vocation and societal function. The Varna vyavastha exhibited a remarkable degree of adaptability and was not bound by rigid constraints. The phenomenon of vertical mobility, wherein individuals could transition from one varna to another, encompassed both upward and downward trajectories.

The prioritisation of children's education was accorded utmost significance. The process of formalising education became institutionalised. It was mandatory for all juveniles to engage in scholastic pursuits. Parents may face retribution from the monarch for impeding the educational advancement of their offspring, as progeny are deemed to be as much a possession of the nation as they are of their caretakers, and are thus regarded as a valuable asset to society.

One could argue that within the context of ancient India, the contemplation of children commenced prior to their conception, with a notable emphasis placed on the preservation and sustainability of pregnancy, as evidenced by the observance of various rituals during this period. The processes of childbirth, the bestowal of a name upon the offspring, the gradual transition from breast milk to a liquid diet, and the subsequent introduction of semisolid nourishment were all accorded the appropriate level of consideration and care. The significance of this matter lies in its implications for the well-being of the child, particularly from a health-oriented perspective. Equally noteworthy is the act of engaging the child in a leisurely walk, commencing after the completion of the fourth month following birth. The act of shaving one's head was a recurring event during the formative years of one's life. However, the rationale behind the notion that a complete covering of hair on the cranium would result in an elevation of cerebral temperature lacks logical coherence. Of paramount significance lies in the gentle articulation and precise enunciation employed when engaging with the young progeny, coupled with the impartation of commendable customs and ethical principles. The commencement of formal education was typically deferred until the attainment of the age of five,

with variations observed across distinct varnas. The Brahmins were bestowed with the privilege of an extended duration of scholarly pursuits.

Females were afforded the opportunity of education, much like their male counterparts, albeit in a distinct educational institution facilitated by female educators. Henceforth, it can be deduced that there existed a conspicuous absence of prejudice pertaining to the acquisition of knowledge by the fairer sex, thereby signifying the progressive nature of the ancient Indian civilization in this particular domain. The young males were anticipated to solicit sustenance, perchance as a means of priming themselves for their forthcoming duty as familial providers and earners of livelihood. The young females were instructed in a manner akin to their male counterparts, albeit without the societal expectation of acquiring a means of sustenance, thus absolving them from the necessity of engaging in the act of begging. This measure likely served as a safeguard against potential instances of molestation. It was anticipated that they would possess a high degree of proficiency in the art of managing a household.

The students were instructed in the art of comportment and the utilisation of decorum. They were counselled to cultivate virtuous attributes such as veracity, hygiene, and relinquish detrimental tendencies such as belligerence, envy, retribution, avarice, or indolence. These evoke thoughts of contemporary psychiatric interventions that involve imparting life skills to school-age individuals, thereby equipping them with the means to bolster their capabilities, while concurrently mitigating the risk of developing emotional, behavioural, and conduct disorders.

Since antiquity, it has been widely acknowledged that a guru ought to possess profound erudition and exhibit unwavering moral rectitude. Likewise, an elucidation was provided regarding the qualities that render an individual deserving and commendable as a student. The elucidation of the manner in which progeny ought to engage in the pursuit of knowledge was also expounded upon. By uttering the sacred syllable "Om," the student possesses the ability to direct their cognitive faculties towards the pursuit of knowledge and scholarly endeavours.

Families of young individuals were obligated to remunerate for their scholastic pursuits through the customary practise of offering a monetary contribution known as "guru dakshina" upon the culmination of their educational journey. Nevertheless, individuals who possess merit yet lack financial means and possess a strong desire for intellectual pursuits have the opportunity to acquire knowledge without incurring any cost.

It has been duly acknowledged that in order to prioritise the pursuit of knowledge and minimise extraneous influences, an environment conducive to introspection and seclusion is imperative. The Gurukuls were strategically established at a distance from urban settlements, ensuring a harmonious seclusion while maintaining a reasonable proximity to facilitate sustenance acquisition without undue hardship. The prohibition of indulging in bodily senses was implemented in order to prevent any potential distractions that may divert the student's attention away from his scholarly pursuits. Distractions of a carnal nature were particularly disapproved of, and for young gentlemen, any unsolicited interaction with the fairer sex was rigorously forbidden. There existed a profound emphasis on the preservation of veerya, commonly referred to as semen, with its depletion being regarded as notably deleterious. This cogitation has persevered to the present day and is expounded upon by numerous youths as the fundamental catalyst for their sexual, physical, and psychological tribulations.

## **JAINISM AND CHILDREN**

In the context of **Jainism**, which emerged around 500 BC, it is noteworthy to observe that the philosophical framework does not encompass any distinct provisions or conceptual constructs specifically tailored to address the needs or concerns pertaining to the younger members of society. It is widely posited that the impartation of Jain principles to juveniles during their formative years is



imperative in order to cultivate a strong foundation for the adherence to Jainism in their adult lives. The following principles are hereby delineated:

**Ahimsa**, the principle of non-violence, is deeply ingrained within the teachings of Jainism. Practitioners of this ancient Indian religion are steadfastly committed to refraining from causing harm to any sentient being, be it human, animal, or even plant life. This profound reverence for all forms of existence, regardless of their perceived significance, serves as a guiding principle in the ethical conduct of Jains. Consequently, individuals are enjoined to adhere to a vegetarian dietary regimen, replete with a multitude of constraints. They are required to exclusively consume potable water that has undergone the process of filtration. It is prudent to abstain from the consumption of honey and alcoholic beverages as well.

**Satya**: It is imperative that individuals adhere to the principles of veracity and refrain from endorsing any form of falsehood in their counsel.

**Asteya**, the ethical principle that guides us, admonishes against the act of appropriating that which does not rightfully belong to us.

**Brahmacharya**, a principle rooted in ancient wisdom, espouses the virtue of unwavering fidelity towards one's chosen life partner.

**Aparigraha**, a principle rooted in ancient wisdom, espouses the notion that individuals ought to cultivate a state of detachment from the allure of material possessions. It is imperative for individuals to exercise restraint in their desires and refrain from accumulating an abundance of material possessions.

Furthermore, individuals are instructed in the noble practise of contributing to the less fortunate members of society. There exist four distinct categories of benevolent contributions that have been meticulously delineated: sustenance, erudition, pharmaceuticals, and safeguarding. It is imperative that sustenance be provided to individuals who find themselves in a state of hunger and socio-economic disadvantage, such as orphaned children and widowed individuals. It is highly recommended to initiate the operation of educational institutions, facilitate the dissemination of literary resources, and engage in pedagogical endeavors. Concurrently, it is imperative to attend to the infirm by administering appropriate pharmaceutical interventions, while also ensuring the safeguarding of individuals from potential hazards.

## **BUDDHISM**

### **Guidelines for the Juvenile Cohort's Existential Journey**

It is incumbent upon a juvenile individual to fulfil the duty of providing assistance and support to his or her parental figures. He ought to contemplate the notion that they have nurtured my growth and development, and in turn, I shall reciprocate by fostering their own advancement and well-being. I shall dutifully discharge my obligations towards them. I shall persist in upholding the esteemed family tradition and endeavors to cultivate within myself the requisite qualities and accomplishments that would render me deserving of the inheritance that is to be bestowed upon me. Parents demonstrate their profound affection for their offspring through a myriad of methods, shielding them from malevolent forces, instilling within them a sense of moral rectitude, and equipping them with the necessary skills to procure sustenance. At an opportune juncture, they facilitate his nuptials and bestow upon him his rightful patrimony.

### **Principles governing existence for adherents**

It is imperative for a disciple to exhibit profound reverence towards their esteemed mentors. It is incumbent upon him to elevate himself from his current position and extend a gesture of respect by saluting them. It is imperative that he exhibits a fervent disposition towards his academic pursuits and dedicates meticulous focus to them. It is incumbent upon him to personally attend to the needs of his

esteemed instructor, for a teacher's profound affection for his pupils compels him to impart the wisdom he has acquired through personal experience. The instructor imparts knowledge and expertise in various disciplines and trades to the individual. The pedagogue bestows commendation upon the pupil in the presence of his comrades and acquaintances. The pedagogue consistently prioritizes the welfare and security of their protégé.

#### Principles for the Conduct of Females in the Journey of Existence

The teachings of Buddha advocate for the diligent exertion of effort by women, emphasizing the virtues of meticulous organization and a gentle demeanor. It is advised that women rise prior to their husbands and retire after them, displaying a commitment to their spouse's well-being. Furthermore, women are encouraged to acquire knowledge and actively contribute to their partner's occupation, while also demonstrating reverence and hospitality towards their husband's parents, relatives, and esteemed individuals of religious standing. Additionally, it is suggested that women extend gracious hospitality to any visitors who grace their abode, offering them both a place to rest and sustenance to nourish their bodies. It would be prudent for her to attend to the infirm with the intention of restoring their well-being. It is imperative that she attend to the needs and well-being of the household staff. It would be prudent for her to exercise fiscal prudence in preserving the financial resources accrued by her spouse. It is evident that the aforementioned Jain and Buddhist concepts lack comprehensive elucidation with regards to the domain of children. In essence, their discourse aligns with the teachings expounded in the Manusmriti.

Ancient manuscripts have been found to contain depictions of both somatic and psychological maladies afflicting the juvenile population. The illustrious work of Vagbhata, known as *Astangasangraha*, meticulously expounds upon the intricate realm of paediatric medicine within its initial six chapters. With utmost erudition, Vagbhata delves into a comprehensive elucidation of various medical conditions afflicting children, encompassing detailed depictions, etiological factors, and efficacious therapeutic interventions. In a similar vein, the *Kashyapa Samhita* also expounded upon the various medical afflictions that affect the paediatric population. Only a limited number of psychiatric disorders have been discerned among the paediatric population, and regrettably, these conditions have not been expounded upon in great depth. The prevalent disorders that were discerned include *Shiroroga*, commonly known as headache, wherein one of the contributing factors was attributed to emotional stimuli. Additionally, *Mridakshanana*, colloquially referred to as *Pica*, characterised by the ingestion of soil by children, was also observed. Furthermore, *Shayyamu*, denoting bed wetting, and *Dantashabda*, signifying teeth grinding, were among the identified conditions. Furthermore, the text expounds upon various afflictions of a grave nature, such as epilepsy (referred to as *Apasmara*), which manifests as recurring episodes of unconsciousness accompanied by vocal expressions, convulsive limb movements, involuntary biting of the tongue, frothing at the mouth, and the involuntary release of bodily fluids, both urinary and faecal in nature. The textual content exhibits indications that are evocative of a state of psychosis. These children have been characterised as exhibiting aggressive tendencies and displaying disorganized behaviours, such as neglecting personal hygiene and struggling with the management of bodily waste. Children of such nature exhibit a distinct lack of concern for their personal safety, often displaying a propensity to recklessly engage in perilous activities such as leaping into the fiery depths or plunging into the depths of a well. Individuals may experience a perceptible sensation of heat within their physical form, accompanied by an increased desire for hydration. It is plausible that one might experience haemorrhaging from various bodily apertures. This particular ailment has been characterised as incurable and ultimately lethal. There exist two additional conditions that can be characterised as amenable to treatment, which are indicative of mood disorders. In one particular scenario, the child exhibits indications of heightened sexual impulses, elevated levels of merriment, an enhanced focus on personal grooming, adorning oneself with garlands, and engaging in discussions centred around matters of affection. Conversely, in another scenario, the child displays symptoms characterised by excessive concern, frequent episodes of weeping, a prevailing sense of anxiety and apprehension, a

notable lack of assertiveness, and a state of lethargy. Additionally, the child exhibits a diminished appetite, accompanied by dryness in the lips, throat, and limbs.

The aetiology of these disorders is postulated to arise from either imbalances in bodily humours or as a result of external metaphysical factors. The Charaka Samhita expounds upon the intricate concept of bodily humours, delineating them as Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. The equilibrium of these humours is preserved within a state of optimal health in an individual. The classification of individuals into three distinct constitutional types, namely Vata Prakriti, Pitta Prakriti, and Kapha Prakriti, is based on specific physical and psychological attributes. Each of these types is characterised by the predominance of a particular humour type. Individuals exhibiting Kapha Prakriti have been discerned to possess a constitution of elevated quality, whereas those displaying Pitta Prakriti are considered to possess a constitution of moderate quality. Conversely, individuals embodying Vata Prakriti are deemed to possess a constitution of lesser quality. In a parallel vein, Ayurveda also expounds upon the concept of personality archetypes, referred to as Gunas. The tripartite constituents of existence, known as the Gunas, encompass Satva, Rajas, and Tamas. Satva has been discerned as the preeminent Guna. The equilibrium of these trigunas is instrumental in determining the individual's disposition, wherein the prevailing dominance of a single triguna ultimately shapes their character. Numerous classifications pertaining to the intricacies of human personality have been expounded upon, such as the delineation of seven distinct Satvika Prakriti types, namely Brahma, Arsha, Aindra, and others. Satvika personalities have been expounded upon as individuals who embody the virtues of veracity, moral rectitude, and sagacity, while exhibiting commendable mastery over their own impulses and desires. A comprehensive categorization of Rajasa Prakriti reveals the existence of six distinct types, namely Asura, Rakshasa, Sarpa, and others. The Rajasa Personality has been characterised as exhibiting authoritarian tendencies, displaying a disposition towards cruelty, and exuding an aura of intimidation. There have been delineations made regarding three distinct manifestations of Tamasa Prakriti, namely those characterised by timidity, diminished cognitive faculties, and unsatisfactory conduct, exemplified by entities such as Pashava and Matsya.

It has been posited that psychological disorders are predominantly correlated with an imbalance of Gunas, as per the ancient Indian philosophical framework. Metaphysical or extrinsic rationales were postulated to encompass the phenomenon of being under the influence of ethereal entities such as spirits, grahas, or bhutas. These entities can be classified as paranormal malevolent entities, traversing the earthly realm in pursuit of sacrificial tributes and prey.

The management of said conditions encompassed the utilisation of ayurvedic remedies, the observance of sacred rituals such as supplications, the presentation of offerings, the donning of distinctive garments and amulets, as well as the recitation of mantras. In addition to the aforementioned practises, the regimen also encompassed the utilisation of specialised bathing techniques, deliberate exposure to solar radiation (dhupa), as well as the application of fumigation utilising an assortment of herbal substances (Dhuma). Various medicinal substances were administered within the context of honey, milk, or ghee, each at distinct temporal intervals. The dosages of medication administered to paediatric patients were distinct from those prescribed for adult individuals.

## CONCLUSIONS

The intricate elucidation of maternal and child health care can be discerned within the Rgvedasamhita and subsequent texts. The elucidation of the notion of conception, along with the identification of circumstances conducive to the production of offspring of superior quality, as well as the selection of commendable male and female companions for the purpose of generating such high-caliber progeny, the delineation of the fertility window, and the exploration of techniques to attain the desired gender, all serve the ultimate objective of realizing the principles of eugenics. The Vedic folklore provides a comprehensive account of maternal nutrition, the nourishment of the foetus, and the intricate process

of foetal formation and development over a period of approximately nine months. Additionally, it delves into the concept of the descent of atoms into the foetus, known as Garbhavakranth, shedding light on this phenomenon. The comprehensive elucidation of intra-partum care, the temporal initiation of labour, the intricate mechanics of the birthing process, and other pertinent aspects are also expounded upon.

Child care is comprehensively expounded upon, encompassing the provision of neonatal care all the way through to the realm of scholastic education. The Samskara, or rites, recommended for implementation from the neonatal stage through childhood, exhibit a remarkable degree of scientific rationale and provide substantial support for the holistic growth and development of the child in various dimensions.

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