

## Hindu Samskaara

Samskaara (sam-skaa-ra) is what refines and modifies one's personality that helps a person to grow into a fine citizen. That which happens around the person produces effects on the person, in terms of his subsequent behaviour, manners, conduct and activities. Samskaara is the process of formatting our conscience.

Conscience begins to form in the foetus soon after the brain cells get differentiated into memory cells. Although the foetus is the product of a mixture of genes from the father as well as the mother, the conscience relies on the feed it acquires from the mother during pregnancy.

Generally when one pronounces samskaara, one means the good samskaara, but samskaara(s) can be good and/or bad. Bad samskaara(s) are the effects of bad company, bad habitat and bad influences on a person that turn him into a vile person.

Every moment of our life can beget good or bad samskaara, due to good or bad influences. Hindus are aware that if proper samskaara is not provided on a pro-active basis, to their children as they grow up, and within the prescribed age limit, then the child might acquire bad samskaara(s). Our conscience and character are molded not just by our experiences, but also by the knowledge and wisdom that are fed into our minds.

Hindu wise men in the course of history devised and developed for the general public a number of samskaara(s) some of which are practiced even today.

Until the last century sixteen such ancient samskaara ceremonies were advised for a perfect orthodox Hindu, and many more depending upon what avocation he or she takes up in life. The ceremonies are only pretensions that accompany the introduction of the samskaara(s) (Table).

Table

No	Samskaara	No	Samskaara
1	Garbhadaana	9	Upanayana
2	Pumsavana	10	Mahanamni Vratha
3	Shimanthonnayan a	11	Maha Vratha
4	Jaatakarma	12	Upanishad Vratha
5	Naamakarana	13	Godaana Vratha
6	Nishkramana	14	Godaana
7	Annapraashana	15	Samavarthana
8	Chowlakarma	16	Vivaaha