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ṢŌDAŚASAMSKĀRĀS AS REFLECTED IN KĀLIDĀSA'S MAHĀKĀVYAS

1Dr REMYA S

1Asst.Professor CONTRACT

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There are changes happening in the life of an Indian from his birth till his death, in his thoughts, life style and rituals. As far as Indian is concerned the so called saṁskāras are some of the karmas observed from the date of his consumption in his mother womb till his burial after death. The westerner's as well as the other nations and their people watch these changes with awe and curiosity. These saṁskāras are begun in the family and continued as a person grows and then they are transmitted into the society. We get a knowledge about these saṁskāras mainly in the Grehyasūtra in the kalpa which is a part of the vedāṅga. There are 42 saṁskāras in the Grehyasūtra and in the Gautama dharmasūtra there are 40 saṁskāras and apart from these there are diverse saṁskāras given by manu in his manusmṛti (16), Yājñavalkya smṛti (12), Viṣṇu smṛti (7), Aśvalāyana smṛti (13) etc and scholars view them with different outlooks. We can see a reflection of these saṁskāras in the vedic sāhitya and laukika sāhitya. In the Mahākavyas of Kālidāsa who is known as the kavikulaguru of laukika sāhitya he deals with the saṁskāras which are taken from the Manusmṛti.

Scholars say that there is a systematic and scientific study of Nyāyaśāstra, Dharmaśāstra, Epigraphy, Ecology, Psychology, Geography etc in the works of Kālidāsa. So many studies have been done on the saṁskāras as evident in Kālidāsa's works. It proves that Kālidāsa had a deep knowledge of Dharmaśāstra. Saṁskāras are observed for man's earthly and heavenly prosperity. The ṣōdaśasaṁskāras detailed in Manusmṛti are Garbhādhāna, Puṁsavana, Sīmanthonayana, Gātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Niṣkramaṇa, Annaprāśana, chūḍākaraṇa, kaṇaveta, Vidyāraṁbha, Upanayana, Vedāraṁbha, Keśāntha, Samāvarthana, Vivāha, Anteṣṭi. In these ṣōdaśasaṁskāras are reflected in Kālidāsa's Mahākāvyas.

The great Sanskrit critic Mallinātha Interpreted the Influence of ManuSmṛti on Kālidāsa's works more than any of his contemporaries. As far as Kālidāsa is more evident in his Mahākāvya than the other works. Kālidāsa has included the 16 Saṁskāras in manasmṛti in a man's life which extended from his birth to his death more than any saṁskāras .Manu in his manasmṛti ,dealt with in detail the various saṁskāras which made a man's life systematic and disciplined .The focus is on a disciplined life more than anything else. Without discipline human life will be extremely complicated .so kālidāsa has to tried to include a systematic life style and saṁskāras through his characters. Kālidāsa also succeeded in reaching out to his audience through his works and educate them of these ideals.

In our busy modern hectic modern life it is very difficult for an ordinary man to lead a disciplined an systematic lifestyle .so we should dry to go back to our roots and learn from the great men of the past. But what is the way to instruct oneself of our past, it has my belief that Kālidāsa could be consider a visionary or a seer who through his works held a mirror to the past atleast to some extent.

This study is a descriptive analysis of which ślokas in Kālidāsa's mahākāvya reflect the ṣoḍaśasaṁskāras dealt within manasmṛti .my attempt here is a study in the descriptive method on how the ṣoḍaśasaṁskāras in manasmṛti are reflected in the works of Kālidāsa who is known as Indian shakespeare.

The ṣoḍaśasaṁskāras notified in kālidāsa's mahākāvya and if it is done so how many of them are dealt with in detail . For the sake of convenience ṣoḍaśasaṁskāras are divided into five groups . They are pre-natel saṁskāras , childhood saṁskāras ,educational saṁskāras ,matrimonial saṁskāras and funeral rites.

Pre-natel saṁskāras

Garbhādhāna,puṁsavana and sīmanthonayana are perceived us pre-natel saṁskāras.Among the three only sīmanthonayana is not mentioned in kālidāsa's Mahākāvya.In Reghuvamśa (2.75)and kumārasambhava (3.16) Garbhādhāna are alluded .puṁsavana is referred to in reghuvamśa(3.103)Sīmanthonayana was not mentioned in kālidāsa's Mahākāvya .

Childhood saṁskāras

The childhood saṁskāras enumerated in Manasmṛti are Gātakarma ,Nāmakaraṇa,Niṣkramaṇa,Annaprāśana,Chūdakaraṇa,Karṇaveda and samāvartana.Gātakarma is the cutting away of the umbilical cord .In Reghuvamśa (10.78) we can see that kālidāsa had a clear idea about Gātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa is

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in life of any person .In Reghuvaṁśa kālidāsa explains how Dileepa named his son and in kumārasaṁbhava (1.26) he expounds the naming ceremony of pārvati. Chūdākara ṇa saṁskāra also called chaula and it is done when an infant reaches three years of age .In Reghuvaṁśa (3.18) Kālidāsa specifies how chūdākarma is done.But we cannot see any example of niśkramaṇa ,annaprasāna and karṇaveda in kalidāsa.We can include vidyāraṁbha,upanayana,vedāraṁbha,keśāntha and samāvarttana in educational saṁskaras.In Reghuvaṁśa(3.29) instances of vidyāraṁbha and upanayana are expounded together .

Keśāntha saṁskāras also called gōdāna.In Reghuvaṁśa is done at the time of the Brehmacāri's return from his Gurus abode after completing his education as we can see in Reghuvaṁśa (5.10)

Marriage saṁskāras

Another important saṁskāra is matrimony .Kālidāsa illustrates matrimony through kumārasaṁbhava(6.19), Reghuvaṁśa(7.10) and also in the marriage of Aja and indumatī.Another instance of this saṁskāra is the marriage of Śiva Pārvatī in Kumārasaṁbhava.

Anteṣṭi

This saṁsaṁskāra was very commonly practiced at the time of Kalidāsa.The funeral rites of Kāmadeva in Kumārasaṁbhava(3.72) and Deśaratha in Reghuvaṁśa(12.10)are instance of Anteṣṭi

Garbhādāna is a planned pregnancy using ancient wisdom .Sudakṣiṇa attends to the sacred cow Nandini to propitiate it and seek its blessing for conceiving a healthy able child.The planned pregnancies are common in modern time also but using different methods .Going back to agrarian life and presting nature will be beneficial to both the individual and society without any doubt.There are different opinions as to when the foetus becomes a boy or a girl .Puṁsavana done at the third month of conceiving in order to ensure a safe pregnancy .It was done in the form of sacrifices in old day which is replaced by modern day scanning and suitable medical care Gātakarma is done at the time of cutting of the navl cord .These days it is not practicable,Because most of the delivery in hospitals .Naming ceremony was done in ancient times as an identification and also to proclaimed the persons character.It is pity that now a days many meaningless names are given to children .It is good to invent names but they should also be meaning as done by our forefathers.

Vidyāraṁbha which has been observed by Indians for centuries is still common among Indians without the discrimination of caste ,religion or community.It is done on vijayadeśami day and elaborate arranged Men's are made for this even now.Upanayana was common among Brāhmaṇa ,kṣatriyas,vaiśyas in Kālidāsa's times expect the śūtras.But in modern times only the Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriyas do this.Vedāraṁbha in old days education meant mainly the mastering of the Vedas .Now more common ,wider,and deeper .The student is not restricted to be a Brehmacāri.

Institutionalised education was not the only practice in Kālidāsa's times. This time is practiced in gurukula system. Such practices have disappeared and there is no need for samāvarttana in modern times. sīmanthonayana, chaula, keśāntha, karṇaveda and annaprāsana are not mentioned in Kālidāsa's mahākāvya. Probably because Kālidāsa considered them less important. Law ensures that a boy should be more than 18 years old in order to get married. Kālidāsa's times of celebazy and samāvarttana are not practiced by modern man.

Anteṣṭi is the very important rites in the Kālidāsa's times. Different kinds of funeral rites are practiced in modern times because different religious different ways of burying their dead.

The detailing s in Kālidāsa's Mahākāvya reflect his knowledge of ancient wisdom, theories and practices. The routines described here were part of their life style and their civilization. But times have changed and so also life style and civilization. The way a child was born and brought up in ancient India was different from modern times as we can see in Kālidāsa's Mahākāvya. More than any writer of ancient times Kālidāsa expounded them in his writings. So we can say that Kālidāsa's writings are hold a typical mirror to ancient life style. In order to alleviate the violence prevailing to day in our society, it is good to back to the wisdom found in the kālidāsa mahākāvya. We can also the discipline ourselves better if we are follow the traditional ways of life. Thus the ancient wisdom found in Kālidāsa's works reaches out to contemporary life also and it very relavant today too.

END NOTES

1. Adha nayanasaṁmutham jyotiratreraiva dyoḥ surasaridiva tejo vahnishtayutamaisam .

Narapatikulabhutaiḥ garbhamaḍḍa rāṅgi gurubhirbhiniṣṭam lokapalannubhavaih. (10.78)

2. Tasmai himadreh preyatam tanujam yatatmane rochayitum yatasva .

Yoshitsu tatviryanishekabhumiḥ saiva kshemetyatmabhuvopadishṭam. (K.S.3.16)

3. Priyanuragasya manah samunnaterbhujarjitanam ca digantasambpatam.

Yadhakramam pumsavanadikah kriya dhritesca dhirah sadrisirvyadatta. (R.V.3.10)

4. Kumarah kritasamskaraste dhatreestanyapayinah.

Anandhenagrajena samam vavridhire pituh (R.V.3.78)

5. Tam parvatityabhijanena namna bandhupriyam bandhujano juhava .

Umeti matra tapaso nishidha pascadumakhyam sumukhim jagama (K.S.1.25)

6 . Sa jatakarmanyakhilo tapasvina tapovanadetya purodasa krite .

Dilipasunurmanirakarodhbhavah preyuktasamskara ivadhikam bhabhou. (R.V.3.18)

7. Dhiyah samagraih sa gunairudaratih kremacchatastraschaturarnavopama.

Tatara vidhya pavanatipatibhirdiso haribhirdarharitamivesvarah.(R.V.3.30)

8. Api presannena maharshina tvam samyagvineeyanumato grihaya .

Kalo hyayam sankremitem dviteeyam sarvopakarakshamamasramam te. (R.V.5.10)

9. Adha visvatmane gauri sandhidesa midhah sakhim .अथ विश्वात्मने गौरी सन्दिदेश मिथः सखीम्।

Data me bhubritam nadhah premaneeekriyatamiti.(K.S.6.1)

10. Adhopyantra sadrsena yuktam skandena sakshadiva devasenam .

Svasaramadaya vidharbhanadhah puraprevesabhimukho bhabhuva . (R.V7.10)

11.Krodham prebho samhara samhareti yavadhgirah khe marutam caranti.

Tavat sa vahnirbhavanejnma bhasmavasesham madhanam cakara .।(K.S.3.72)

12 Raja api tatviyogartah smritva sapam svakarmajam.

Sareeratyangamatrena sudhilabhamamanyata.(R.V.12.10)

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