

secret name known only to the parents was given. Hardly any secret name except that of Indra as Arjuna is known from the Vedic literature.¹⁰ It is to be noted that the rule as to giving the designation of a Nakṣatra as the secret name or otherwise is not illustrated by a single recorded name of a teacher in the Brāhmaṇas.¹¹ The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa several times mentions the adoption of a second name with a view to securing success, and also refers to the adoption of another name for purposes of distinction.¹²

SŪTRA PERIOD

The Gṛhya-sūtras provide us details about the name-giving ceremony, the secret name, the common name, the *abhivādānīya* name, the quality of the name as well as the formation of the names of the boys and girls.

Name-giving ceremony

The Śāṅkhāyana¹³ and the Pāraskara¹⁴ Gṛhya-sūtras prescribe the name-giving ceremony to be performed on the tenth day after the birth of the child but usually the Gṛhya-sūtras recommend its performance after ten nights have elapsed.¹⁵ The Gṛhya-sūtras consider the first ten days after the birth of the child as of impurity. Hence it is prescribed by the Hiraṇyakeśin¹⁶ that on the twelfth day the mother and son take a bath, the house is made clean, the *Sūtikāgni* is taken away and the *Aupāsanāgni* is established. Having put wood on that fire, and having performed the rites down to the *vyāhṛti* oblations, they sacrifice twelve oblations with the verses, "May Dhatri give us wealth"; according to some (teachers they make) thirteen (oblations). This, O Varuṇa 'Hail, good luck?' Then let the father give the name to the child.

The Gobhila Gṛhya-sūtra is very liberal with regard to the performance of the name-giving ceremony as it says, "When ten nights have elapsed after (the child's) birth, or a hundred nights, or one year, the *Nāmadheyakarana* (or giving a name to the child) is performed".¹⁷ Gobhila¹⁸ details the ceremony as follows: He who is going to perform that ceremony, the father or a representative of the father, sits down to the west of the fire on northward-pointed *Darbha* grass, facing the east.