

Are females allowed to perform a funeral rite?

The Chandogya Upanishad states that the funeral rites are performed by the one who maintains the family name and continues the lineage (Kul). This is the main reason why traditionally it's the sons and not the daughters who have performed the final rites. The moment when a female child is born the parents already know that their child won't be their child in the future because at the Kanya Daan ceremony in the Marriage ceremony she will be given away to her soon to be Husband. The son's only carries forward the family lineage of "Kul" not the daughter. She will carry her husband's family lineage name.

Other possible reasons for the exclusion of women are perhaps for practical reasons. The funeral rites last for approximately two weeks, and the person performing these as indeed all other rites must be physically clean at the time. (But this is another very very controversial topic which I won't get into now). Women however are subject to their menstrual cycle and may not be able to perform the rites during the two weeks. Also shaving of the hair is a compulsory act of mourning and is prescribed for men rather than women whose hair was in ancient society (and still is) their "crowning glory". And then the people who performed the rites were required to be strong enough to carry the coffin over long distance, and so men were again chosen.

Nonetheless in the esteemed Garuda Purana Preta Khanda 8.3-4 Bhagavan Shree Vishnu explains to Shree Garudaji in this case special circumstances are allowed where females are allowed to perform the final rites when there is no male issues. "If both families are male-less, the women should perform the obsequies". Here I do rest my case...

Question:- I don't have any males in my family but what if I had a son and he was an alcoholic or an atheistic person? What do I do then?

Answer:- My answer is very simple I would rather have your daughter do the prayers than your son. I would rather have a person doing the prayers with full faith than a person just doing it because he is forced to do so.

*** Certain excerpts were taken from the brilliant book called Death and the Soul's Journey by Pt Munelal Maharaj. Thank you Punditji for your great contribution to mankind.***

DISCLAIMER:- Do note that Dipika is not affiliated to any Hindu group or organization. We at Dipika choose to remain an independent repository of spiritual advice. We appreciate that there are variances between organisations and humbly request that if our views differ from yours that

you respect our decision not to conform to the prescripts of your particular organisation. We remain committed to spiritual advice which is based on scripture.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this article. We pray that this article will assist you in some way and we also pray that it helps you to appreciate the beauty and remarkable foresight of our ancient Hindu culture. We wish to educate all readers and demystify the path of Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma). Please feel free to share these articles with friends and family who do not have direct access to our website or articles. If you use the articles in any form including blogs and/or as part of other articles kindly credit our website as a source. We hope that the articles serve as a reference to you and your family when you need clarification of certain topics. Jai Hind... Jai Shree Radha Krsna.

Please do visit our Website to receive more
free information about our beautiful culture

www.dipika.org.za

Compiled for the upliftment of Sanathan Dharma

Narottam das & Arjun Nandlal

Email info@dipika.org.za