

Namaste/Vanakkum

The following few pages I would highly recommend to print for the 12/13th day ceremony and give a copy to every family that attends the ceremony. This copy will explain lots of rituals that we do with regards to death. Thank you. Jai Hind...

The Last Rites (Quotes from the Garuda Purana)

Go-Dan:- Sesame seed, iron, gold, cotton, salt, seven types of grains, earth and a cow. The person should give these 8 precious gifts to a brahmana. The wise have prescribed the gift of salt to be given freely and it opens the doorway to the other world.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 4 verses 7-8, 14)

When he reaches the Vaitarani river, the boatman asks, "Have you gifted a cow", if he has he gets into a boat and crosses the terrifying river. But if has not gifted the cow, he is brushed aside by the boatman and is forced to swim the river. In the river birds with sharp beaks, ants, etc bite him. The gift of a cow at the time of death serves as a relief for the deceased.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 5 verses 123-126)

Sesame seeds, iron and salt pleases Yamaraj, the gift of cotton wards off dangers from ghosts, the gift of a cow enable the giver to cross all difficulties and save him from the threefold afflictions, the gift of gold and grains yields happiness in the afterlife and the gift of earth (plot of land) one shall never experience any torture or distress in hell.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 30 verses 12-16)

If a healthy man makes this gift its efficacy is increased 1000 fold, if a sick man makes the gift its efficacy is only a 100 fold. If his son gifts something on behalf of the dead, the gift is indirect and its efficacy is rendered normal. Hence gifts should be made by one's own self.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 47 verses 37-38)

On weeping:- One should not weep. If they weep and spit phlegm the soul of the dead person is compelled to eat that.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 15 verse 58)

Upon death:- The soul without the body is like a flame without fire. After leaving the earthly body, the soul immediately obtains an airy body. In that action less body he moves in air only. Pindas are offered unto the airy body of the deceased. Whatever pinda the son gives to him during the 10 days, the same unites the Vaayuaja (airy) body with the pindaja (form made from pindas) body. If the pindaja body is not there the Vaayuaja body suffers.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 10 verses 72-83)

He should offer six pindas on the day of death in the serial order. By gifting away the 6 pindas, the body achieves sanctity and fitness to be sacrificed in the fire. Otherwise, the six presiding deities of the pindas, cause large-scale destruction.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 15 V 30-39)

Until the funeral rites are properly performed the dead man, ever hungry, roams about day and night in the form of airy matter.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 13 verse 23)

"If the funeral rites are not performed properly", he (the deceased) returns to his home, stays on the roof and watch the activities of his kins. He then causes diseases and grief to his relatives.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 20 verse 8)

If the funeral rites are not performed in the prescribed way, the soul of the deceased (in rebirth) deviates from the righteous path and falls in the company of the wicked.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 20 verse 42)

The 10-day observance of aashauca (impurity):- The sons and relatives of the deceased should observe aashauca for 10 nights. For 10 days, without intermittence, the son should offer pinda and pour handful of water (water in a saucer) in favour of the deceased.

[\(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 15 verse 61-62\)](#)

He should offer nine pindas in nine days i.e. one pinda on each day. After giving the tenth pinda, one becomes pure after the night expires. [\(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 5 v. 18-19\)](#)

With the offering of ten pindas (in 10 days) by the descendants of the deceased the soul acquires a new body. [\(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 34 verse 44\)](#)

In death impurity last for 10 days, O bird. [\(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 39 verse12\)](#)

If the soul is not propitiated duly during the 10 days it will have to wander in the ether without food, agitated by hunger. [\(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 34 verse 33\)](#)

The 12th/13th day puja:- As long as the pindas are not merged, one remains impure. The dead man gets a new appellation (name, designation) after the merge. The twelfth day after death is appropriate for the sapinda rite. No joyous ceremony such as marriage, etc. can be performed if the householder dies and the sapinda has not been performed.

[\(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 26 verses11-13\)](#)

Once sapindya is completed, the pretahood ends. On the thirteenth day, Yama's attendants capture him. So in 348 days he reaches Yama's city, being dragged by Yama's servants.

[\(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 5 verses78-89\)](#)

On the eleventh day and the twelfth, the soul of the dead eats to his fill. While offering gifts of lamp, food, water, etc. to the deceased one should mutter the name of the preta. Whatever is offered to the deceased should be done by the name of the preta, for doing so gives delight to the deceased. On the thirteenth day, the soul of the dead is taken to the High Way. Now, he assumes a body born of the pinda and feels hungry day and night.

[\(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 15 verses 74-76\)](#)

Feeding the Brahmanas:- Whosoever be the brahmana invited for the feast, they (the forefathers) enter his body, eat and return to their abode. During the period of Shraddha, Yama release even the ghosts and the forefathers staying in hell who being hungry run to the mortals to receive the offerings made by their relatives. They repent for their misdeeds while they desire to be served with milk-rice, by their descendents. Therefore the descendents should gratify them with the milk-rice. [\(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 10 verses 26-30\)](#)

Gifts to the brahmana on the 12/13th day:- An umbrella, shoes, clothes, a ring, a water-jar, a stool and a vessel – these seven are called padas.

Umbrella – There is terrible heat on the way, which scorches the deceased. By the gift of the umbrella, the deceased receives shelter of shade and feels comfortable.

Sandals – the deceased passes over the sword-edged forests, mounted on a horse. On Asipatravana Naraka the sands are very hot and sinners have to dash over the hot sands. But by donating sandals the deceased is mounted on a horse.

Clothes – The messengers of Yama becomes very propitious and courteous by this gift and when satisfied they do not torment the deceased along the way.

Iron Ring – The messengers of Yama wield terrible weapons and they run here and there. By the gift of a ring they vanish from the presence of the deceased and they allow him to travel at his own pace.

Water-jar – the deceased gets enough water on the way, which is full of heat, devoid of air and water.

Stool (seat -Asana) – The deceased obtains tasty meals in the interval of time while he walks over the path at his leisure.

A vessel – (same as the water jar) [\(Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 18 verses 16-24\)](#)

The 1-year ceremony:- At the end of the year he (the deceased) eats the annual shraddha offered by his relatives. In the shraddha of the 11th month many brahmanas should be feasted because then the deceased is very hungry. ([Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 5 verses 140 & 152](#))

Those who worship the forefathers, deities, brahmanas and fire, in fact worship Me who am the soul of all beings. By performing Shraddha according to the means and method, the man pleases the universes as far as Brahmaloaka. ([Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 10 verses 59-65](#))

A few frequently asked questions:-

Q: - Can a funeral be performed on ***Ekadashi?

A: - Absolutely NOT!!! Any shraddha Puja (i.e. a funeral, the 10th day puja, the 12/13th puja, the 6th and the 11 and ½ month pujas should NEVER be performed on this most holy of days. The puja should be performed on the following day. This is stated in the [Brahma-Vaivarta Purana](#). “If one performs the shraddha ceremony of oblations to the forefathers on the Ekadashi tithi, then the performer, the forefathers for whom the shraddha is observed, and the purohita, or the family priest who encourages the ceremony, all go to hell.” “The shraddha ceremony should be held not on Ekadashi but on the next day, or Dvadashi”. There are very grave consequences for those who perform shraddha puja on Ekadashi.

***Ekadashi (for those who don't know) is two days in a month that we don't consume grains.

Q: - What one can or cannot do in this mourning period until the Sapinda prayers?

A: - Lord Vishnu said ”Offering of Ashirbaad (blessings), Deity worship, direct contact with the public, giving of Daan (charity/gifts), Hawan, Tarpana, Fasts, and Brahmin bhojan (feedings Brahmins) are forbidden in this period”. ([Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 13 verses 20-21](#))

Q: - When do we start counting the days for the rituals

A: - According to the [Garuda Purana 10.21](#) “From the time the Pinda is placed in the hand of the corpse, the departed soul assumes the name of Preta, until the Sapindi Puja is concluded”. In the antechamber the claimant places the 6th and the last pinda in the right hand of the deceased. When that Pinda is placed in the right hand the calculation of the number of days for the rituals are thus determined.

Q: Is there a need to do a 40-day ceremony after birth or death?

A: Definitely not! There is no such observance in our scriptures. After the Sapindi Puja (the 12/13th day puja the house puja's can commence as normal)

Q: Do we have a three-day Havan after death in our scriptures?

A: This is a concoction and certainly not prescribed in our scriptures. If one does this then he will incur the wrath of the deceased. By the 3rd day when one offers the daily pinda only up to the neck is formed. The new subtle body of the deceased is only formed in 10 days, thus the new body is incomplete.

Q: Does the widow have to wash off her Sindoor on the death of her husband?

A: There is no scriptural backing for such a ritual. However, the widow ceases using the Sindoor in the traditional manner.

Q: - Can non-sattvic foods like meat be offered in the 10th or 13th days?

A: - Absolutely NOT!!! Before one offers food to ones ancestors one must offer the food to Lord Vishnu which then becomes Vishnu prasad and then a portion of that food is offered to our ancestors... Now ask yourself would it be correct to offer meat, cigarettes and alcohol to Lord Vishnu ...OF COURSE NOT. It's a very great sin to offer any un-sattvic foods (e.g. Meat and any type of intoxicants) to one's ancestors. The following three verses are proof in Vedic sastras.

“It's not Dharma that in the Shraddha feast one should offer meat nor should one eat meat. Only

vegetarian food must be offered because meat is obtained by killing”.

(Srimad Bhagavatam 7.15.7).

“Vegetarian food prepared with pure butter, milk, sugar and curd, etc. are most pleasing to the Pitrs (Ancestors)”.

(Matsya Purana 17.30).

“Cow’s milk, honey and the sweet pudding made of milk and rice and sugar with dry nuts satisfies the Pitrs (Ancestors)”.

(Matsya Purana 17.36)

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Compiled for the upliftment of Sanathan Dharma

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