

The Importance of Seedha/Daan and what should be given/gifted to the priest or Guru

Living creatures get influenced through daanam,
Enemies lose hostility through daanam,
A stranger may become a loved one through daanam,
Vices are killed by daanam.

Source - Handbook of Indian Psychology (pages 365-366)

There are a vast number of interpolations of this most controversial topic, that now we at Dipika feel obliged to comment about it and right the wrongs that have truly marred our understanding of this topic. There is much information on this topic located in the Vedic shastras but one should remember that one should to view the information with a modernistic mentality.

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In South Africa, Hindus call the giving of a priest grains and the like "Seedha". It is also known as Daan (Daanam) and Dakshina. (Sat Kriya Sara Dipika).

Dakshina is the giving of a financial remuneration to a priest in exchange for his/her services rendered. This is a vexed issue which is constantly being challenged and questioned. Many of those of a younger generation may question — "Why should we pay the priest?", "Shouldn't they be rendering their services as a spiritual act to the community?", "Does the exchange of money not demean the sanctity of the ceremony?", "How can you mix spirituality with money?", etc. . It must be recognized or noted that many of the other religious communities, through their organizations, eg. churches, synagogues and mosques etc. employ their clergy. They have employment contracts, free housing or subsidized rentals, superannuation, medical insurance and all the other privileges of an employee.

Hindu priests are divided into two categories — Temple Priests (*archakas*) and Domestic Priests (*purohits*). Temple priests in South Africa are usually hired from India and Sri Lanka and brought to this country to work under a contract — they are paid a salary and all amenities are provided.

Domestic priests, on the other hand, are mostly independent and generally have no organisational financial support, especially in South Africa. Most are householders with dependents to support, and many of the foreign priests in South Africa are also supporting their extended family back in India or Sri Lanka. Unless they are working part-time as priests and have a day-job, they have no alternate source of income. To survive, the priests rely on the generosity of the public. Most priests residing in South Africa are subjected to the same cost of living as everyone else viz. rent, mortgage, insurance, travel costs, bills, schooling for their children and so forth. Priests are required to pay taxes and also make their own "superannuation" arrangements. Priests do need to be self-sufficient in their old age and have an income stream via their self-funded "retirement package". As there is no employer remuneration, priests should save a significant portion of their income for their future.

How are the priests supposed to survive and continue to serve the sacramental and ceremonial needs of the Hindu community if they are not supported adequately by their Yajman (client) families?

Giftng of *Dakshina* to one's priests or guru is an act of generosity which is integral to all Hindu religious ceremonies. Through the giftng of *dakshina*, one is supporting the priests, who, in turn, are the upholders and the teachers of Sanatan Dharma (a.k.a Hinduism). It is upon the householders that the priests and the monks (*sanyasis*) depend, for their livelihood and ability to continue their work of teaching and

promoting the values of Sanatan Dharma. Householders should express their heartfelt love of Sanatan Dharma and appreciation of the work of the priests and gurus through gifting generously according to their financial means.

Gifting of Dakshina is an integral part of every religious ceremony as per the scriptural quotes provided below.

(Do note:- Kindly bear with us with regards to what will follow in the next two pages.)

Rates of Dakshina

*prājāpattyavratāśaktau dhenuṃ dadyāt payasvinīm |
dhenorabhāve dātavyaṃ tulya mūlyaṃ na saṃśayaḥ ||*

In the prājāpati and other rites one should give a milch cow (i.e. with a calf) if there is no cow available then its price should be given. (to the priest)

*dhenuḥ pañcabhirāḍhyānāṃ madhyānāṃ tripurāṇikā |
kārṣapaṇaika mūlyā hi daridrāṇāṃ prakīrttitā ||*

If the price of a cow is 5 kaarshapanas (16 panas) a rich man should give it in full. A man of the middle class should give three kaarshapanas and a poor man can give one kaarshapana only.

Vedic shastras recommends a sliding scale of Dakshina as a guideline, based upon the price of a dairy cow. In South Africa (2017 CE) given the price of milk yielding pedigree cows range from 12000 Rands – 15000 Rands, and taking R12000 as a baseline, we can calculate the estimated dakshina.

Therefore for any ceremony performed, a person of low income should offer only 1/5 of the price of a cow, a person of middle income should offer 3/5 and the higher income should offer the entire price of the cow.

Based upon the combined annual income of the husband and wife the following is the recommended minimum dakshina baseline:--

Low income household = R2400
Middle income household = R7200
High income household = R12000

(One should bear in mind that many Christian communities donate 10% (tithes) of their salary to the Church.)

Of course, many that read the information provided above would be flabbergasted and in total disbelief at the cost factor. Some may resign to the fact that they cannot afford to perform a puja anymore. Kindly bear with us and read on.

Method of gifting Daanam/Dakshina/Seedha.

When gifting Dakshina one should not simply hand it to the officiating priest as one pays a tradesperson. The dakshina offering, together with some fruit, grains (and other ingredients mentioned below), a betel-leaf + betel nut, coin and a flower is placed upon a tray which one has prepared beforehand. The husband stands next to his wife (who is to his left side) (or persons that are widowed or living alone or single, that it is not necessarily a husband and wife standing side-by-side when giving the siddha to a priest.), holding the tray with both hands and humbly requests the priest to accept the Seedha. The priest takes half a handful of rice from the rice packet on the tray and then recites sacred Sanskrit blessing mantras while blessing that rice in his/her palm. The priest then, after chanting the sacred mantras upon that rice, gives the rice back to the wife in her achara (sari end piece).

If there is more than one priest all should receive dakshina in the order of their seniority.

Why rice must be given back to the wife by the priest :- Another name for the Divine Mother is Annapoorna Devi. "Anna" in Sanskrit refers to "grains". Grains in the Vedic culture signifies wealth, prosperity and Lakshmi. When the priest blesses that amount of rice and gives it back to the wife, that rice is surcharged with auspicious powerful Vedic mantras and when that amount of blessed rice is put back into the house's store (container) of grains, that rice now increases the well being, prosperity and auspiciousness in that household. Hence, it is compulsory that the priest gives some of the rice back to the Yajman's wife.

Rules of Dakshina from the Shatapatha Brahmana (S.B)

NOTE:- The yajamāna (yajman) means the householder who is performing the puja who is generally the husband.

One who hosts a yajña (fire sacrifice) without giving dakshina to the priests obtains sinful reactions. (S.B i ;2;3;4; S.B.ii 2;2;2.)

No oblation (homa) should be offered without dakshina. (S.B. ix ;1;3;7.)

Let there be no haggling for the sacrificial fee, for by haggling the priests are deprived of their place in heaven. (S.B. ix 5;2;16.)

By means of giving dakshina to the priests, the yajña becomes successful; for this reason gifts are made to the priests. The glory of the yajña is the sacrificial fee

(*dakshina*), hence if the priest is given a *dakshina* he must not (at least on the same day) give it away. But rather on the morrow (the day after), he can give it away after having acquired the glory; whatever it may be; gold, a cow, a garment or a horse. (S.B. xiv ;1;1;32)

As great as the *yajña* is, as large as its extent is; by so many *dakshinas* does the *yajamāna* invigorate the *yajña*. It means that the *yajamāna* should give as much as he can afford-*yathā śaktyā*. (S.B. ii 2;2;3.)

Such is the measure of the priests' fees, but the *yajamāna* may give more, according to the depth of his conviction. (S.B. ii 2;2;5.)

A priest must not accept a *dakshina* (of kind) which has been refused by another priest; nor should he keep it; let him give it to some needy kinsman, this is the law concerning a refused *dakshina*. (S.B. iii 5;1;25.)

From the Smṛtis (Vedic literature's)

Let the *yajamāna*, who has faith and controls his senses, perform other meritorious acts (for example pilgrimages, fasts etc.), but let him on no account commission *yajñas* at which he gives *dakshinas* which are less than those prescribed in *shastras*. (Manu Smṛti xi 39)

The sense organs, honour, bliss, longevity, fame, progeny and domestic animals are all destroyed by a *yajña* at which too little is given as *dakshina*; hence a person of limited means should not offer a *yajña*. (Manu Smṛti xi 40)

By giving 16% of his produce to the king (in taxes), 5% to the *Devas* (upkeep of temples) and 4% to support the *Brahmins* a cultivator is exonerated from all sins. (Parashara 2:14)

To the *brāhmaṇa* who has performed a *homa* (fire sacrifice) a pair of garments must be given. (*Viṣṇu Smṛti* xc 4.)

The *yajamāna* should not choose a priest who is unlearned in the *Veda* nor one who haggles about his fee. (*Āpastambha Smṛti* ii;5;10;8)

Any *yajña* (sacrifice) performed without direction of scriptural injunctions, without distribution of food, without *Vedic* hymns and without *dakshina* to the priests and without faith must be considered to be in the mode of ignorance (*tamas*). (Bhagavad Gita 17.13.)

From the Purānas

Having performed a ritual one should immediately give dakshina; then only does one obtain the fruit of the ritual; this is the injunction of the Vedas.

If the yajamāna through ignorance does not give the dakshina to the brāhmaṇas the moment the sacrifice ends, the sacrifice is rendered completely futile and in vain. The results of this sinful action are disease and poverty. If one muhurta (24 minutes) passes the evil results are doubled and if one night goes by without the dakshina then the evil is multiplied sixfold.

Lakshmi Devi departs from the yajamāna's house and curses him, the ancestors (Pitars) never accept anything that is offered by him in the shraaddha puja or tarpana (offering of water to the ancestors).

The one who does not give the dakshina and the priest who does not request it; both of them fall into hell just as a bucket falls into the well when the rope breaks.

The yajamāna who does not give the dakshina when asked becomes devoid of all sense and certainly falls into the hellish realm called Kumbhipāka naraka. (Prakṛti -khaṇḍa - Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa)

A cow, a metal vessel and an unwashed (new) garment constitute the sacrificial fee [for post mortem rites]. Asvalayana Grihya Sutra 4:6:19

Dakshina should always be given to the brāhmins and the devotees during the performance of yajñas, because any religious activity that is performed without sacrificial fees becomes fruitless and in vain. Therefore a yajamāna should give according to his means with faith and devotion because dakṣina is a segment of the yajña. (Pancarātra - Pādma Samhita 11;267 – 269.)

Summary of recommended Dakshina fees

Please note- For the recommended dakshina fee, the yajamana is encouraged to display his/her generosity and give to his/her capacity. Some priests may also require mileage (___ amount of rands/dollars/pounds, etc., per kilometre) and tolls to be paid in addition to the dakshina, depending on where you reside. This should be discussed with your chosen priest should he/she decide on using his/her own transport.

Should a priest have a pre-determined fee for the performance of, for example, a wedding ceremony?

This is rather controversial topic that many priests feel hard done by. For many weddings in South Africa, the cost can run into the hundreds of thousands of rands and yet, when it comes to the priest's Dakshina, he/she is generally given pittance. Many priests have mentioned to me that "if the family can spend R200,000 on a wedding then they should give me approximately 10% of that". The priests further say that hiring the master of ceremonies (MC) can cost approximately R5000, the décor and catering approximately R100,000, the costs of the wedding garments over R20,000. The wedding can do without décor, food and the MC but a wedding certainly cannot do without a priest to officiate the rituals. Thus, one can understand that priests are quite rightly justified in airing such grievances. At this point in time, we will leave this particularly hotly-debated topic at that.

KINDLY NOTE:- I, Narottam Das, having performed pujas and the like for almost a generation (30 years) have NEVER requested a fee from my Yajman's. But do note this is my personal point of view and in my own capacity. I don't expect other priests to be the same. It just never sat right with me to charge a fee for my services rendered.

Another reason why I haven't charged for my services is due to the following katha from our Puranas. Why is a true brahmin, or priest, cursed to consistently struggle financially?

The following katha from the Puranas states, "many great sages gathered at the bank of river Sarasvati to participate in Maha Yagya (havan) organized at that particular time. Maharishi Bhrigu was also present there. All the great saints and sages could not decide which out of the Trinity Lord's Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva who is pre-eminent and to whom they should consider as the predominating deity of that yagya. With the consent of all the great saints present there, it was decided that Maharishi Bhrigu will test and decide who should be the predominating deity for that yagya.

Upon being entrusted with the task Maharishi Bhrigu decided to test Lord Brahma first. He went on to see Lord Brahma in Brahmaloaka. On reaching Brahmaloak Maharishi displayed utter disrespect to Lord Brahma on purpose. Lord Brahma got angry and wanted to punish Maharishi but Maha Saraswati, wife of Lord Brahma saved Maharishi from his anger. Angry with disrespect, Maharishi Bhrigu cursed Lord Brahma that no one will worship him in Kaliyuga. To this day, there are very few temples devoted to Lord Brahma on this planet (the notable exception being the Brahma Temple at Pushkar, India).

Maharishi Bhrigu then visited Lord Shiva at Kailash Parvata (mountain). On reaching Kailash Parvat, Nandi stopped him from going inside because at that time, Lord Shiva and Parvati devi were being intimate. Bhrigu Muni then cursed Lord Shiva to be worshiped in the Linga form. However, there is a murti form of Lord Shiva in Kashi, India at the Maha Mrityunjaya Temple.

Then, finally, in order to test Lord Vishnu, Maharishi reached Vaikuntha Dham. He entered the Dham without Lord Vishnu's permission and saw that the Lord was resting at that time. Maharishi tried to wake up the Lord, but Lord was in deep sleep. On seeing no reaction from Lord, Maharishi kicked Lord Vishnu on His chest. That strike by Maharishi Bhrigu left a foot print on Lord's chest and that foot print is known as "Shree Vatsa". Lord Vishnu got up after the strike and realized what had happened. On realizing that Maharishi had kicked Him with his foot, Lord asked him, "Maharishi, have you hurt your foot? My chest is strong but your foot is not so strong." Seeing the decorum of Lord Vishnu, Bhrigu Muni was pleased and declared Lord Vishnu superior amongst the Tridevatas. However the wife of Lord Vishnu, Shree Maha Lakshmi witnessed the whole incident, as she was also present in the Dham at that time. She could not tolerate the disrespect displayed by Maharishi Bhrigu towards Her husband, Lord Vishnu and cursed Bhrigu Muni that henceforth She would never visit Brahmins and they will all live in absence of wealth. On hearing this curse from Maha Lakshmi, Bhrigu Muni told her about the true nature of his visit. Maha Lakshmi then told Bhrigu Muni, that her curse would still haunt future Brahmins but whenever any Brahmin would worship Lord Vishnu, they would be liberated from Her curse.

So a true Brahmin priest should in fact wholly rely on the mercy of Lakshmi-Narayana for his/her upkeep and never chase after material wealth and the like.

The seedha guideline one should gift for different types of prayers



*** Kindly note:- The items from the various companies from the above picture are just used as an example and we are by no means promoting their products.

We have provided in the previous page an example of a basic set up tray of Seedha items – to give you an idea how to set a tray in an appropriate manner. We always appreciate appropriate presentation hence the above tray is as such. From the front left in a clockwise direction are 3 types of vegetables, 3 types of grains (rice, dal and beans), 3 types of fruits, sugar, oil, milk, teabags, flour, towel, shirt, cash in an envelope, handkerchief, packet turmeric, salt, chattai, and betel leaf + betel nut + coin + flower.

BASIC SEEDHA GUIDELINE:- (kindly view the picture on the previous page).

We would humbly suggest that, on a tray, place 3 or 5 kinds of grains (like rice, beans, dal), 3 types of fruits, 3 types of vegetables, 500g rough or fine salt, sugar, flour, 250ml oil or ghee, a few tea bags, a little hurdi in a small packet, 1 towel or shirt, CASH (according to your financial situation but kindly be liberal) and ***** SALT**. Salt and rice are the most important of these daan's. Also add on the tray 1 betel leaf + flat brown betel nut + 1 coin + 1 flower. These items are the basic seedha to be gifted and you may add more items should you desire so. The priest cannot demand certain items and **definitely** cannot demand money instead of, for example, the towel or shirt. Also he/she cannot demand a shirt from an expensive retailer.

*****SALT***** Kindly read this comprehensive article on Dipika named “**Salt and Its Importance in Hinduism...**” (ctrl+click (**HERE**) to go to this link on DIPIKA.)

With regards to the amount of grains, flour, sugar, hurdi powder, etc., kindly use your discretion – the amounts above are simply suggestions that may be adhered to. The amount of seedha that is gifted to the Brahmin or priest is such that he/she should be able to cook for a few meals.

Is it necessary to add a towel and/or shirt? Most definitely, yes. Vastra (clothes) is one of the main gifts to gift the priest. The priest cannot demand that instead of gifting him/her a shirt or towel that cash should be given. This is incorrect and not acceptable.

Optional:- 3, 5 or 7 new handkerchiefs. At one corner end of the handkerchief put a ¼ tsp white rice grains, and a coin and tie the corner. There should be either 3, 5 or 7 handkerchiefs.

Can I include onions in the Seedha, considering that there is such controversy around onions? This is a grey area and if the priest does not mind, then it is fine to give him/her. However, a priest who is a brahmin generally would not accept onions.

Das (10) Maha (great) Daan (gifts) GUIDELINE:- These items are some of the important gifts one can give to a Brahmin or a priest. The 10 gifts are as follows 1} Cow (Go Daan), 2} Land (Bhumi Daan) 3} Sesame seeds (Til Daan) 4} Gold (Swarna Daan) 5} Ghee (Ghrit Daan) 6} Clothes (Vastra Daan) 7} Grains (Dhaanya Daan) 8} Jaggery (Gur {Sugar} Daan) 9} Silver (Rajat Daan) 10} Salt (Lavana Daan).

Of course certain items above eg. a Cow, Land, Gold and Silver will most likely be too costly for one with limited financial means – hence, according to the Srimad Bhagavatam, one must perform acts of charity according to “Deśa-kāla-pātra”. Srila Prabhupad explains in S.B 6.1.39 “There is consideration, deśa-kāla-pātra. Deśa means situation, and kāla, time, and pātra, and the subject”.

If it is not possible to donate a piece of land, one should take a small lump of clay or a small bank packet of sand and place it on a thari (tray), to substitute for a cow - donate a small murti cow (metal or marble miniature cows are commonly found nowadays), to substitute for gold or silver - wash a pre-used piece of gold or silver you have in your possession wash it with hurdi water and that you may donate. Take Sanklap (a statement containing the details (day/time/place, etc.) of the prayer)) and donate it to a Brahmin along with ‘Dakshina’. Some or many priests may take offense that you are giving pre-used gold or silver, but that priest should understand the times we are living in and as well as he/she should become familiar with the previous paragraph on “Deśa-kāla-pātra” that we just mentioned.

SEEDHA GUIDELINE for General prayers, Katha (Satyanarayan) and Jhanda (Hanuman and Shiva) Puja, Vishnu Puja, House-entering prayers, Vaastu Puja, Foundation prayers, Tilak Puja, Hurdi Puja, Wedding Rites and Mool Shanti Puja:-

On a tray, place 3 or 5 kinds of grains (like rice, beans, dal), 3 types of fruits, 3 types of vegetables, 500g rough or fine salt, sugar, flour, 250ml oil or ghee, few tea bags, little hurdi in a small packet, 1 towel or shirt, CASH (according to your financial situation but kindly be liberal) and SALT. Salt and rice are the most important of these daan's. Also add 1 betel leaf + flat brown betel nut + 1 coin + 1 flower.

Optional:- 3, 5 or 7 new handkerchiefs. At one corner end of the handkerchief put a ¼ tsp white rice grains, and a coin and tie the corner. There should be either 3, 5 or 7 handkerchiefs.

SEEDHA GUIDELINE for all Devi (mother/mata/ammen) pujas:- On a tray place 3 or 5 kinds of grains (like rice, beans, dal), 3 types of fruits (like banana, orange, lime/lemon, mango, pomegranate {if in season}), 3 types of vegetables (one should be cucumber), 500g rough or fine salt, sugar or Jaggery, flour, 250ml oil or ghee, 100g Brown or white Sesame seeds, 250ml milk, few tea bags, little hurdi in a small packet, 1 towel or shirt, CASH (according to your financial situation but kindly be liberal) and

SALT. Salt and rice are the most important of these daan's. Also add 1 betel leaf + flat brown betel nut + 1 coin + 1 flower.

Optional:- 3, 5 or 7 new handkerchiefs. At one corner end of the handkerchief put a ¼ tsp white rice grains, and a coin and tie the corner. There should be either 3, 5 or 7 handkerchiefs.

SEEDHA GUIDELINE for a Graha Shanti (9 planets) Prayers:- On a tray place 3 kinds of grains (like rice, beans, dal), 200g Navdaan (9 grains), 3 types of fruits, 250ml milk, 500g rough salt, 1 hand-towel, CASH (according to your financial situation but kindly be liberal) and SALT. Also add 1 betel leaf + flat brown flat nut + 1 coin + 1 flower.

GUIDELINE Go-Daan Puja Daan:- In the Garuda Purana, Shree Vishnu advises to Shree Garuda what to gift in a Go-Daan Puja:- Black sesame seed, iron, gold, cotton, salt, seven types of grains, land and a cow. The person should give these 8 precious gifts (padas) to a brahmana. (Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 4 verses 7-8, 14 also Chapter 16 verses 27-28, and Chapter 30 verses 12-16).

For the IRON – a metal key ring or nail is used as a substitute.

For the GOLD – a gold piece of chain or earring washed in hurdi water can be used as a substitute.

For the LAND – sand in a bank packet is to be used as a substitute.

For the COW – a small ornament cow is to be used as a substitute.

Optional:- Gifts of an iron pot, salt, grains, ghee, and laddu are also recommended. (Page 144 Sat Kriya Sara Dipika by Gopala Bhatta Goswami Maharaja.)

Daan on a Funeral day:- It is forbidden to donate any seedha including cash to the officiating pandit or Brahmin. According to the Garuda Purana, the moment the 6th and last Pinda is placed in the right hand of the deceased in the ante-chamber, from that moment **gifting of Daan (charity/gifts/cash money)** is forbidden during the mourning period. (Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 13 verses 20-21). It is very sinful (maha-aparadha) for a pandit or Brahmin to demand a fee for an Antyesthi Puja (the final rites prayers). The karmic consequences he/she will face thereafter will be most severe for him/her.

SEEDHA GUIDELINE for 10th days Shraddha Puja for a deceased (to the Maha Pathar):-

The barber and the Maha Pathar (one who performs the puja).

The barber is given cash after the hair is shaved. Then the Maha Pathar performs the puja and the following is gifted to the Maha Pathar after he completes the puja.

The 6 and, other items, that should be gifted are as follows 1) 1 umbrella 2) one pair of footwear/sandals 3) one shirt or clothing of your choice 4) a water vessel (in other words a clay pot) with a little black (eg. 100g) til in the pot and some water in the pot 5) a stool or chattai (straw mat) 6) a small container of black til (this can be put in a clay pot) 7) 3 or 5 kinds of grains (like rice, beans, black urad dal), sugar, flour, 250ml oil or ghee, few tea bags, little hurdi in a small packet, CASH (according to your financial situation but kindly be liberal) and SALT. Also add 1 betel leaf + flat brown betel nut + 1 coin + 1 flower.

These gifts are to help the deceased along his/her journey to Yamaloka. The Maha Pathar cannot **NOT** demand that instead of gifting him a shirt or towel, etc that cash should be given. This is incorrect and not acceptable.

SEEDHA GUIDELINE for 12th / 13th day Shraddha Puja for a deceased:-

On a tray place 3 or 5 kinds of grains (like rice, beans, black urad dal), 3 types of fruits, 3 types of vegetables, 500g rough or fine salt, sugar, flour, 250ml oil or ghee, few tea bags, little hurdi in a small packet, 1 towel, a kurta top or shirt, 100g black sesame (til) seeds, CASH (according to your financial situation but kindly be liberal) and SALT. Salt and rice are the most important of these daan's. Also add 1 betel leaf + flat brown betel nut + 1 coin + 1 flower.

Together with the above mentioned Seedha, the Seedha below is compulsory. Please note this Seedha is **ONLY** compulsory for the 12th/13th day days prayers. It is **NOT** compulsory, rather optional, for the 6th month and the 11 and half months prayer. Also the Pandit can't demand it for the 6th month and the 11 and half months prayer as well.

(Garuda Purana Pret Khand Chapter 18 verses 16-24) Gifts to the brahmana or priest on the 12th / 13th days Shraddha puja:- An umbrella, pair of footwear/sandals, clothes (clothing of your choice), an iron ring, a water-jar (clay pot), a (bar) stool (or chattai (straw mat)) and a vessel (metal cup) – these seven are called padas (gifts).

These gifts are to help the deceased along his/her journey to Yamaloka. The priest cannot **NOT** demand that instead of gifting him/her a shirt or towel that cash should be given. This is incorrect and not acceptable.

Optional:- 3, 5 or 7 new handkerchiefs. At one corner end of the handkerchief put a ¼ tsp white rice grains, and a coin and tie the corner. There should be either 3, 5 or 7 handkerchiefs.

SEEDHA GUIDELINE for 6th Month and the 11 and half month

Shraddha Puja for a deceased:-

On a tray place 3 or 5 kinds of grains (like rice, beans, black urad dal), 3 types of fruits, 3 types of vegetables, 500g rough or fine salt, sugar, flour, 250ml oil or ghee, few tea bags, little hurdi in a small packet, 1 towel, a kurta top or shirt, 1 Chattai, 100g black sesame (Til) seeds, CASH (according to your financial situation but kindly be liberal) and SALT. Salt and rice are the most important of these daan's. Also add 1 betel leaf + flat brown betel nut + 1 coin + 1 flower.

Optional:- 3, 5 or 7 new handkerchiefs. At one corner end of the handkerchief put a ¼ tsp white rice grains, and a coin and tie the corner. There should be either 3, 5 or 7 handkerchiefs.

These gifts are to help the deceased along his/her journey to Yamaloka. The priest cannot **NOT** demand that instead of gifting him/her a shirt or towel, etc that cash should be given. This is incorrect and not acceptable.

SEEDHA GUIDELINE for Pitar Paksha Puja and Panchak Shanti Puja:-

On a tray place 3 or 5 kinds of grains (like rice, beans, black urad dal), 3 types of fruits, 3 types of vegetables, 500g rough or fine salt, sugar, flour, 250ml oil or ghee, few tea bags, little hurdi in a small packet, 1 towel or shirt, CASH (according to your financial situation but kindly be liberal) and SALT. Salt and rice are the most important of these daan's. Also add 1 betel leaf + flat brown betel nut + 1 coin + 1 flower.

Optional:- 3, 5 or 7 new handkerchiefs. At one corner end of the handkerchief put a ¼ tsp white rice grains, and a coin and tie the corner. There should be either 3, 5 or 7 handkerchiefs.

These gifts are to help the deceased family members and late friends. The priest cannot **NOT** demand that instead of gifting him/her a shirt or towel, etc that cash should be given. This is incorrect and not acceptable.

A question that may be asked by some is - "Why, in Pitar paksha, are we donating to a deceased that may have already taken birth again?" Lord Vishnu answers this query... Lord Vishnu said to Lord Garuda in the Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 10.

The Lord replied: “The shruti declares that the food served to the brahmanas in the Shraddha turns into nectar, and so forth for the departed souls. By their names and gotras (family lineage) the ancestors receive the offerings made by the relatives. The mantras carry the same when they are recited with devotion and faith. How the articles reach the ancestors should not be doubted, O Garuda. When food is offered to the departed souls in the appropriate manner, at the appropriate time and place, as prescribed in the sastras, they carry the same to the ancestors in their path. Even though they assume different species and reach different worlds, with different names and gotras, they receive the offerings made in their favour by their kins. Just as when a cow is lost in the herd of cattle, the calf searches for her and ultimately finds her, so the shraddha food searches the deceased person, though he has assumed a different form”.

An article that will be a follow-up to this article will be released in the near future titled “The difference between a Brahmin and a Priest - Sanskrit (Pandita)/Purohit (Puro-hita)”

CREDITS:- Pages 2-6 of this article were procured from the website <http://www.australiancouncilofhinduclergy.com>

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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.

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