

**What Procedures to Follow During
the 12/13th Days After The Cremation of a Deceased.**



Ajamila just passed on.

The Yamadutas on the right and the Vishnudutas on the left

While the body is being cremated the family members who had remained back at the home where the funeral had just taken place, should cleanse the house by mopping the floors with a mixture of lime water or rose water or just water with a few drops of Ganga jal in the water before the Claimant (the one who performed the rite) and the others return from the cremation site.

When the family members return from the river/sea/ghat after disposing the ashes, they stand by the entrance of the yard and they are cleansed by washing their hands firstly and then touching the following items which are for purification. These are the following items: - touch water, fire and iron (or a metal) with syringaberry leaves and sprinkle this over yourself three times and then sprinkle a little water on yourself. After this ritual they enter the house and take a bath and wear clean clothes.

Then the next step is after you have worn clean clothes, you now need to keep a picture of the deceased and a clay lamp in front of the picture, in a room or a designated area in a southerly direction. This clay lamp must be kept lit continuously for 12 days. On the 12th day this lamp must go off by itself. **AND THIS LAMP MUST NOT BE TAKEN ON THE 10TH DAY TO THE RIVER.**

So for the next 10 days the deceased family observes an "impurity" period.

WHAT IS MEANT BY 'IMPURITY'?

Impurity in the religious sense is not the same as impurity in a microbiological sense, here we are talking of RITUAL IMPURITY known in Sanskrit as 'asaucham' in which one has to conform to a certain type of behaviour and place some restrictions on oneself and one's socializing for a certain period of time.

Ritual impurity or asaucham is observed for 10 days and is of two kinds;

- a.** after the birth of a child - known as sutakam
- b.** after death of a family member - known as mritakam.

WHY OBSERVE ASAUCHAM?

These periods of sutakam and mritakam have a religious as well as a social significance. In the case of death a period of mourning is prescribed lasting from 10 to 30 days depending upon the caste of the person ("According to Vedic scriptures, if someone dies in the family the whole family becomes contaminated for some time, according to its status. For example, if the family is brahmana their contamination period is twelve days, for the kshatriyas and vaishyas it is fifteen days, and for shudras thirty days". - A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Nectar of Devotion. Chapter 8 - Offenses to be Avoided.)

During this period the family are relieved of their various religious and social obligations so that they have time to work through the grieving process. The situation is very much controlled in that what is to be done and what is to be avoided has all been laid down in the scriptures so in this moment of tragedy, loss and bewilderment the situation is controlled from without giving a feeling of security and reassurance. The relatives or neighbours will prepare the meals for the first three days and tend to all the domestic needs of the bereaved family and in this way the whole community comes to the support of the family.

Asaucham is not a condition like a disease by which one is infected and has to wait for it to take its natural course or be treated with antibiotics!

It is rather a condition which one imposes upon oneself. It is a sensible process by which us conditioned souls can come to terms with maturational changes in practical and philosophical ways, that create a positive or insulation shield of confidence in the knowledge that everything has been dealt with. In order to work through one's personal grief, and to avoid disturbance to others in the community through sadness, moodiness, and depression, etc., this simple mechanism is in place.

TO WHOM DOES IMPURITY APPLY?

Impurity applies to the immediate family members including the father, grandfather, brothers, paternal uncles and their wives and children. A married woman observes the impurity of her husband's family and not that of her natural family.

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS?

Yes the following persons are exempt from observing mritakam; the reason being that many people are dependant upon their functions and would be harmed if their essential services were interrupted, so ultimately it is the welfare of the group as a whole which prevails in these matters.

Artisans, architects and builders, doctors and surgeons and other medical workers, politicians and administrators, Vedic scholars and officiating priests, those who are in process of a religious observance or vow i.e. brahmacharis and also those who are fasting for kavady or similar such vow. Those who have been initiated and are engaged in the performance of a yajña lasting more than one day.

WHAT RULES ARE TO OBSERVED DURING MRITAKAM?

So for the next 10 days the deceased family observes a cleansing period. So the family should only eat boiled food (no masala - but you can have salt *** read below) offered first to the Supreme Lord. I.o.w's after cooking the food some of the food must be placed at your prayer place and humbly request Lord Krishna to first partake in that food. After this is done wait for at least 5 minutes and then take out that food and put it back into the pot and mix that food. Now this food is sanctified (Prashad) food. Do not taste the food while being cooked. The food must

first be offered to Bhagavan Shree Krishna. Now the Claimant (i.o.w's the person who performed the last rites) should eat the prashad first then the others follow.

*** Many are divided about if salt can be consumed in these 10 days... The Sanskrit word the Sat Kriya Sara Dipika quotes is called Havishyana. And this is what Sat Kriya Sara Dipika says "Until the 10th day one should only eat havishyana {boiled food}". (Page 147 Sat Kriya Sara Dipika.). In the Sri Hari-bhakti-vilasa (13.10-13) the ingredients for Havishya mentions 'Saindhava' salt (salt from ocean - Sea Salt). But with most families in South Africa the performer of the last rites – the Claimant generally don't consume any food with salt. Again as with family to family the rules may vary and ultimately it's up to the individual to decide.

Regular bhajans (Hanuman Chalisa et al), kirtans and scriptural readings (incl. Bhagavad Gita, Ramayan, Garuda Purana et al) should also take place daily until the 12/13th day. My humble advice is to keep a CD player on 24/7 with different bhajans playing softly in the background... The reason for this is that the deceased who is now a spirit is rather confused, disorientated and lost and playing spiritual music, reading scriptures and singing bhajans appeases and pacifies the spirit.

On the day of the funeral there should be no cooking at the funeral house. This has been discussed above in this article as well. That can be done at a family or friend's house. This should be common sense because when you cook your mind should be totally focused on the cooking. Whatever state of mind you are in at the time of cooking your vibrations enters into the food psychically. So at this time the family are so devastated that any cooking should be done at another person house. The vibrations of the house also are rather low so things like cooking should be done elsewhere. No havan should be performed from the day of the cremation (the last being in the antechamber of the crematorium) until the 12/13th day puja. The scriptural reference of this is from the Garuda Purana and this is given at the end of this article.

From the day of the funeral in the night outside the main door of your home, on a saucer place a piece of kush grass and on top of the Kusha grass place one Pinda, and next to that saucer place another saucer with water with a little Til (sesame seeds). Also **ONLY** for three nights starting from tonight - next to the pinda - place 1 glass of milk, 1 glass of water and light a diya next to the entrance door of your home (when

lighting the lamp please remember Lord Krishna and pray for the deceased welfare). Pray to the deceased to accept these offerings.

How to prepared a Pinda:- 1 handful rice flour, some milk, sesame seeds, a few drops of honey, few drops of red perfume water, little sugar, Jav and ghee. Mix all the ingredients together. Now make the dough in to a ball.



PINDA

The next morning offer the cups of water and milk and the water in the saucer with sesame seeds to a tree/plant and the pinda and Kush grass keep in a plastic packet and keep it safe somewhere outside the house until the 10th day. Counting from tonight until the 9th day, one should offer one pinda daily. Tomorrow morning after sunrise offer just the pinda on a saucer and the water with Til seeds every morning for the next 8 mornings. The 10th Pinda will be offered at the river side on the 10th day.

My very humble advise and something **I HIGHLY** suggest is to offer the 10 Pindas in the 10 days (I.o.w's one daily). This is from the Garuda Purana and the verses are given below. I really do get rather upset when one offers the whole 10 Pindas on the 10th day. The reason for this is that the body needs to form correctly and with time and not fast track the formation of the new body on the 10th day. So through the assimilation of the Pindas offered in the 10 days the Vaayuja Shareer (the Airy-body) combines with the Pindaja Shareer (derived from the Pinda Janma, meaning 'born from the Pinda'. By the end of the 10th day the combination of these two bodies have created the yamyatanaa

shareer (body of suffering). This is the subtle body through which the preta (Ghost form) will experience the hereafter. So this new body we are talking about is the offering of Pindas daily make up the new body called the Pindaja Shareer. Please read below.

When one offers pindas for the 10 days i.e. one for each of the 10 days then the new body is formed. “{On the first day by offering the first pinda the head is formed, by the second offering, the ears, eyes and nose are formed. By the third offering, the neck, shoulder, arms and chest are formed. By the fourth pinda offering, the navel and private parts are formed. The fifth pinda offering, the thighs, calves, legs and feet are formed. The sixth pinda offering, all the vital organs (heart, liver, kidneys, and so forth) are formed. By the seventh pinda offering, the nerves, veins, and nervous system are formed, by the eighth pinda offering, the teeth and hair are formed. By the ninth pinda offering, blood, fluids and semen are formed. By the 10th day Pinda offering, fullness is achieved and hunger is satisfied.” {Garuda Purana Preta Kanda Chapter 5 verses 31-37}

When the claimant offers the Pinda daily the Pinda is divided into 4 parts. The First $\frac{1}{4}$ goes to the Yamadutas (the four servants of Shree Yamaraja, who reside by the deceased home until the 12/13th day ceremony), the 2nd $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Pinda the deceased consumes by smell and the 3rd & 4th $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Pinda is used for the formation of the new body for the deceased called the Pindaja Shareer as explained above.

From the (Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 10 verses 72-83) this is stated “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 actionless 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 Vaayuja (airy) body with the pindaja (form made from pindas) body. If the pindaja body is not there the Vaayuja body suffers”.

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda 35.33,34 “The sixteen shraddhas are the six pindas on the body on the day of cremation and then the pindas offered during the ten days. Thus sixteen in all.”

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 15 verse 61-62 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 5 v. 18-19 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 34 verse 44 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 39 verse 12) In death impurity last for 10 days, O bird.

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

On the 3rd day in the morning the Claimant cleans a small portion of the yard and place a banana leaf on the ground. Light a clay lamp and incense and offer a few Tsps of Kala Urdi (Black Urad) Dal {which should have no salt in that} on the banana leaf while facing south while remembering the deceased. A cup of water and a container of milk should also be offered. Arpana is performed by sprinkling some water around the offerings. While doing this please chant Lord Krishna's mantra "Om Namo Bhagavate Vaasudevaaya"

Scriptural recitations during the 13 days:- Since the soul does not begin his/her journey on the Path to Yamaloka until the 13th day, it tends to linger around the home during this time. Immediately upon death, the soul remains in a state of unconsciousness, emerging from which it may be disoriented and confused. It may not yet be aware that it is in an intermediate state, detached from its gross physical body. If there is weeping and mourning and loud expressions of uncontrollable grief by relative, this creates severe problems for the departed soul and hinders its progress in its afterlife. So prayers, bhajans, scriptural readings etc create and emit potent, positive psychic vibrations which in turn, give tremendous solace to the departed soul. The readings also serve to provide comfort to the friends and family of the deceased, to divert their minds which may be distracted by grief. In this time the Garuda Purana, Bhagavad Gita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Ramayana and other holy shastras are read.

Dasgaatra (10th day) Puja

The Dasgaatra (10th day) puja is generally referred to as the Shaving ceremony. This ceremony is performed for both the male or female deceased on this day. This takes place at the river bed. If there is no river then at one's garage can be the place to perform this prayer. One

should use one's discretion. So early in the morning of the 10th day gather all the Pindas (9 in total) and other materials are taken to the river to be disposed off.

Please note if the 10th day falls on Ekadashi then the 10th days prayers should be performed on the 11th day. It's forbidden to perform any shraddha pujas on Ekadashi. There are serious nasty consequences for performing any shraddha pujas on Ekadashi as stated in the [Brahma-Vaivarta Purana](#).

Ekadashi Dates for 2022 (South Africa).

January	: 13, 28
February	: 12, 27
March	: 14, 28
April	: 12, 26
May	: 12, 26
June	: 10, 24
July	: 10, 24
August	: 8, 22
September	: 6, 21
October	: 6, 21
November	: 4, 20
December	: 3, 19

The barber (Mahaapatra also known as Maha Brahmin) is arranged before-hand generally after the cremation day. The Mahaapatra plays an important part in death rituals. He shaves the hair off the head and pare the nails of the claimant and the men of the family. This is a specific job he undertakes for society.

So when one arrives at the River one should build a tripod (one can do this prior coming to the river) and have a clay pot which should have a small hole in the bottom. Through this hole attach a thin white cloth (see picture below) and fill the pot with water and milk. The purpose behind this is that the deceased “drinks” this liquid for nourishment. On top of the clay pot place a clay lamp with oil and a wick and light

this. Do note in South Africa many use the tripod, but if there is a tree very near the river where the puja is taking place you can hang the clay pot from that.

So on arriving at the river the hair from the head of the claimant and the hair from the head of the rest of family men are shaved off and their nails are trimmed as well. {It is advised in the Garuda Purana that shaving of the hair is a sign of mourning. Cutting of the nails and shaving of the hair have been considered purificatory rites. Hair is also a form of beauty and source of ego, and this is sacrificed as a sign of mourning.} After this the Claimant takes a bath because he will be performing the puja proper. Then prior to the start of the prayers Tilanjali (in a bowl have a mixture water, milk, and black Til) is offered ten times on a knotted kusha grass which was already planted by the Mahapatra by the river's end. The claimant now faces the south direction while offering are done. This mantra is chanted each time the water is offered "Om (name of your deceased) Pretasya Trip-yan-taam". Then the puja proper starts.

The priest (if the 10 pindas were not offered) will now perform the puja. Please note that the Mahapatra is not to perform the Dasgatra puja unless he is a Brahmin. Generally he is just a barber not a priest and to make things worse even if he does the prayers he doesn't even have a bath or wear fresh clothes after he shaves the hair from the claimant and his family. This is not correct, and is something I am not too pleased about. If he shaves you and then he should bath and wear clean clothes. Yes then by all means he is allowed to perform the prayers that is if he knows how to perform the puja proper. Otherwise please request your priest to perform the puja. The puja comprises of the general purificatory rites, sankalpa, the pooja for Lord Vishnu and Shree Yamaraj-ji, the offering of the 10 pindas and finally offerings of gifts to the Mahapatra. Remember that no havan is performed.

*** Now if the 9 Pindas was offered at home for the 9 days then one only needs a Mahapatra as one can do this by oneself without the assistance of a priest.

As above make sure that the tripod with the clay pot is established. Then at the river the men can shave there and then the claimant must bath and wear fresh clothes. Then as above offer the Tilanjali water 10 times on a knotted kusha grass and then offer the 10th Pinda on a kusha grass at the riverbed on a banana leaf. Wait for a few minutes (about 5 minutes) after offering the 10th pinda and then dispose of all the Pindas and the other materials into the river. Please refrain from disposing any

plastic-ware into the river. There is **no havan** in this puja as this is still forbidden until the 12/13th day puja as per the Garuda Purana.

The women folk at their home cut their nails early in the morning and dispose of them (give this in a packet to the men who will dispose of it in the river). After that they bath and wear fresh clothes and then they can cleanse themselves by sprinkling of hurdi/Ganga water all around the house and yard and burn lobhan with a piece of dried cow dung (cow-dung is optional). Now cooking should be done as usual i.e. with masala, spices etc. but still no meat are allowed to be cooked. Please remember that the daily bhajans and kirtans and discourses are still performed, as the deceased is still at the house, until the 12/13th day.

Gifts for the Mahaapatra At the conclusion of the prayers at the river gifts are given to the Mahaapatra. This is known as "Pada Daana" and the gifted items are intended to serve and help the departed soul during his/her one year journey to Yamaloka. The 8 items are as follows 1) 1 umbrella 2) one pair of footwear/sandals 3) one T-Shirt or cothing of your choice 4) a piece of gold. 5) a water vessel {i.o.w's a clay pot} 6) a stool 7) a small container of black Til {this can be put in a clay pot} 8) Food including 5 or 7 types of grains and SALT.

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

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). Also Offering of Surya jal, lighting of deeyas, performing aartee and other forms of daily poojaa which constitute one's nityakarma (daily worship) should be suspended during the 10 days period. But I advise to resume worship once the 12/13th day puja has been completed. This excludes, however, the single deeya that is kept lighting throughout the 12 day period in the name of the departed.

What is Tarpana: Tarpana is the offerings of water libations. The followers of Sanathan Dharma (Hindus) express their gratitude and devotion by offering oblations of water (Tarpana) in memory of their ancestors. Humans have three types of debts when they are born viz. debt to Lord Krsna and the devas, debt to the Rishis and finally debt to ones departed ancestors. 'Trup' means satisfying others. The word 'Tarpana' has been formed from the root word 'Trup'. Offering water to Lord Krsna, the devas, the rishis and one's ancestors one satisfies them immensely and through it is called Tarpana. The objective of performing

Tarpana is that Lord Krsna, the devas, the rishis and one's ancestors whose names are pronounced while performing Tarpana, should bestow happiness on the performer.

So in South Africa many families offer water daily on a knotted kusha grass planted in the ground for 10 days. Lord Vishnu says in the above verse that Tarpana is not permitted in this time i.e for the 10 days. This will of course create some controversy but I am just stating what the Lord says here. But if you are still not comfortable with this and still want to offer the Tarpana then it's up to you.

After the 10 days prayers are completed one still continues with the daily bhajans and kirtans and discourses until the 12/13th day.

Sapindi Puja: In a nutshell Sapindi Puja means the symbolic uniting of the soul of the deceased with those of the immediate past three generations of ones ancestors. This extremely important and compulsory prayer is performed on the 12th or 13th days after the funeral of the deceased. Now the questions many ask me is when should the Sapindi Puja be performed - the 12th or 13th day? Good question. So if the deceased person belongs to the Brahmin caste, the local custom is for the Shraadh Puja to take place on the 12th day and for all other castes on the 13th day after the funeral day. There is a growing practice is using the 12th day for all castes and it's likely that this may be standardized in the future in South Africa. I will still perform the Sapindi puja on the 13th day though. The reason is that who is a brahmin today? A Brahmin is a person who dont eat meat, drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and dont perform any unsattvic acts and secondly if one performs the Sapindi puja on the 12th day the soul only leaves the residence on the 13th day on a 348-day journey towards Yamaloka. Hence my reason for still performing this important prayers on the 13th day.

So lets see what Lord Vishnu says about Sapindi pujas in the Garuda Purana. (Garuda Purana Preta Khand chapter 26 verses 11-13) As long as the pindas are not merged, one remains impure. The dead man gets a new appellation (name, designation) after the merge. The 12th/13th day after the funeral rites is appropriate for the sapinda rite. No joyous ceremony such as marriage, etc. can be performed if the householder dies and the sapinda rites has not been performed.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khand chapter 5 verses 78-89) Once sapindya puja is completed, the pretahood ends. On the 13th day, Yama's

attendants capture him. So in 348 days he reaches Yama's city, being dragged by Yama's servants.

(Garuda Purana Preta Khand chapter 15 verses 74-76)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.

So with the information given above let me elaborate more on the Sapindi Rites. Sapindi-karana — is a prayer to mark the transition of a deceased and a merging with his/her ancestors. Unless this very important prayer is performed one cannot perform any pujas like weddings, katha and jhunda et al.

The ceremony of Sapindi karana or 'uniting the Preta with the Pitrs' takes place on the 12th or 13th days after the cremation, **OR** at the end of three fortnights **OR** on the expiry of the year. The soul of the dead person does not reach the world of the Pitrs at once. It remains separate from them for a time as a Preta/Ghost/Spirit. During this period special offerings are presented to the deceased. But after certain time, the deceased passes into the abode of the ancestors through the instrumentality of the Sapindi karana. By the offering of the Sapindi-karana Shraddha, the son helps his father to dwell in joy with his Pitrs.

On the day that the Sapindi puja is going to be performed one must prepare a "L" shaped bedi (a place where the puja proper will take place) which should ideally be approximately 115 cms long and 23 cms wide and 31cms long and 23cms wide. Below is the picture of how it show look.

Before the actual Sapindi puja is performed one offers 16 + 1 pindas on the bedi. The first pinda one offers on the bedi is called the Vikara (a.k.a. Bikara) Pinda. This important Pinda is first offered seperately away on the bedi in the South-East direction. This is intended for those members of the family, who may have passed on under "inauspicious" circumstances or for those whose funerals rites was incorrectly performed. These spirit beings are eager to partake in the offerings of the Pindas that are offered in the prayers and they hover around in the event of infractions in the performance of the puja proper, which allows them to desecrate the other pindas. Thus this Pinda offering can be considered as an appeasement offerings to them. A simple explantion to

this can be like if I offer you food and you eat to your full and thus quite satisfied and then if I had to offer you food again you will refuse because you are already full hence the offerings are offered first to the spirit beings because when they are full they wont interrupt the puja proper.

Then the 16 pindas are now offered and are as follows. The first 11 Pindas are the 1) Vishnu Pinda 2) Shiva Pinda 3) Yamaraja Pinda 4) Somaraaja Pinda 5) Havyavaahan Pinda 6) Kavyavaahan Pinda 7) Mrityu Pinda 8) Rudra Pinda 9) Purusha Pinda 10) Preta Pinda 11) Vishnu Pinda.

Then the following 5 Pindas are offered 12) Brahma Pinda 13) Vishnu Pinda 14) Rudra Pinda 15) Yamaraja Pinda 16) Tatpuruasha Pinda. These 5 pindas is for the removal of the negative effects of the death, which may have occurred under inauspicious circumstances, as well as an appeasement for the non-performance of the obligatory samskaras (Purificatory processes) during one's lifetime.

The offerings of the above 16 Pindas and the worship thereof are for the destruction and removal of the state of the "preta" in which the jeeva presently exists. Freedom from this condition or state allows the soul to merge with ones ancestors. The Yajman offers on the Pindas water, thread, chandan, uncooked rice, flower petals, incense, lamp, naivedyam, water, betel leaf, nut and coin and lamp again.

The Sapindi Puja proper is now performed. The Sapindi-Karana Shraddha is meant to elevate the departed soul to the rank of a Pitr (ancestor). In this aspect of the Shraddha puja four additional Pindas are now offered on the bedi. Unlike the preceding 16 + 1 Pindas which was round, these four Pindas are elongated or elliptical in shape. If the deceased was male then the Pindas are offered by the following names: -

- 1) Preta Pinda – the deceased's (usually the father) Pinda
- 2) Pitaamahaa Pinda – the grandfather's Pinda
- 3) Prapitaamahaa Pinda – the great-grand-father's Pinda
- 4) Vriddhaa-Prapitaamahaa Pinda – the great-great-grandfather's Pinda.

However in the event that the deceased was a female the then Pindas are offered as follows:

- 1) Preta Pinda – the deceased's (usually the mother) Pinda
- 2) Pitaamahi Pinda – the grandmother's Pinda
- 3) Prapitaamahi Pinda – the great-grand-mother's Pinda
- 4) Vriddhaa-Prapitaamahi Pinda – the great-great-grandmother's Pinda.

Puja of these four Pindas are now performed and on the completion of this, the preta Pinda is now placed on a thari (tray) and then is cut into three parts with a Kush grass and merged with the three Pindas belonging to his/her ancestors viz the father/mother, the grandfather/grandmother and the great grandfather/great grandmother. After the performance of this rite the Preta (the deceased in a form of a ghost for the past 12 or so days) being becomes a Pitr and joins the assemblage of fathers/mothers in their abode (Pitr-loka). So once again the amalgamation of the Preta's Pinda with those designated for the three preceding generations in the deceased's ancestral line is quite important. It symbolizes the freedom from the state of “pret-hood”, by the deceased. Once the puja is completed Tarpana (offerings of libations of water) is commenced. I have already explained above in detail what Tarpana is all about.

After Tarpana is completed the havan is then commenced. Once the havan is completed the puja proper ends. Later on amalgamate all the pindas into one ball and this is placed in a container of water while facing south. Later on all the pujas items must be disposed off in a local river.

Now comes the very important part of donating Daan (gifts) to the presiding Priest. I would humbly suggest that on a tray have 3 to 5 kinds of grains (like rice, beans, dal), 3 types of fruits, 3 types of vegetables, sugar, flour, oil, CASH and SALT. Salt and rice are the most important of these daan's. Together with this daan the daan below is compulsory. Please note this Daan is only given for the 12th/13th day days prayers. This is not compulsory for the 6th month and one year prayers and the Pundit can't demand it as well.

(Garuda Purana Pret Khand 18 verses 16-24) 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)

Please make sure the presiding priest eats food (prashad) before he leaves your residence. If he doesn't then you **SHOULD** be offended and aggrieved. My reason for this is that the Garuda Purana quotes the Ramayan and this is stated below.

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda 10.31-51 “O Garuda, I shall tell you how once Sita saw in the body of a brahmana Her ancestors, Her father-in-law, Her grandfather-in-law and Her great-grand-father-in-law. At the behest of His father, Rama went to the forest. When He reached Pushkara, together with His consort Sita He performed Shraddha with the ripe fruits Sita collected from the trees. When the sun reached the middle of the sky the sages who had been invited by Rama presented themselves. When Sita saw the sages She was extremely delighted. By the instructions of Rama She served them with the food. Then, all of a sudden, She got away from among the brahmanas. Covering Herself behind the bushes She hid Herself. Then having learnt that Sita had

gone all-alone, Rama was anxious and lost in thought. He wondered why She had gone away so soon without feasting the brahmanas. He thought to Himself "Maybe She felt shy, I shall search for Her." Thinking this way He himself feasted the brahmanas. When the brahmanas went away Sita returned. Then Lord Rama spoke to Her: "Why did you leave when the sages came here to the forest. Let Me know the reason of Your abrupt departure" then addressed by the Lord, Sita stood with Her face cast down. With tears flowing down from Her eyes She spoke thus to Her Lord. "Lord, hear, I saw a wonder here. I saw Your father, in front of the brahmanas dressed in royal costume. I saw two elderly folk donning the similar garb. On seeing Your father I moved away from his presence. Attired in bark and hide, how could I serve him with food? How could I offer him food in a vessel of grass in which even slaves would not eat from? How could I, full of perspiration and dirt, go before him knowing that he had never seen me before in that miserable state? I felt shy and moved away from his presence, O Rama." Thus, O Garuda I have told you how Sita saw Rama's ancestors.

So when the Pundit eats the prashad the late father enters and resides in the right side of the Pundit's body, the late grandfather in the middle and the late great grandfather on the left side. As the Pundit eats the Yajman's ancestors eat via him. The Ancestors derive great pleasure from what they eat especially when they partake of Kheer (sweet rice) (Garuda Purana Pret Khand Chapter 10 V.26-28)

WHAT TO DO WHEN A SECOND DEATH OCCURS DURING MRITAKAM?

- 1.** If the second death occurs during the period of the first mritakam then the family only observe the first 10 days and do not extend it.
- 2.** If the second death occurs with one night remaining of the first period of mritakam then the relatives should observe another 2 nights and 2 days.
- 3.** If the second death occurs on the morning after the completion of the first period then they should observe another 3 days and 3 nights.
- 4.** If another death occurs after this then the full period is to be observed.

FUNERAL REQUIREMENTS

(This is a general guideline list & may vary from priest to priest)

AT HOME

8 m of white calico cloth - to dress the body.
1 flower garland for the deceased.
3 packets of agarbatti - for lighting under the coffin
One 5l bucket of water to be placed under the coffin
1 clay lamp with oil & a wick & placed under the coffin
100g sandalwood sticks.
2 strands of kush grass.
Flower petals.
Few mango leaves.
100g Black sesame seeds (til).
Matches.
250g-rice flour to make 6 Pindas.
1 small tray for the pindas.
1 small bottle of red perfume scent.
½ lt milk.
25ml honey.
250ml rose water.
1 piece chandan.
10 Tulsi leaves.
1 Lota of water.
1 small piece of gold – to be placed in the mouth of deceased.

AT THE CREMATORIUM

1 havan kund (only if the crematorium does not have one).
15 mango sticks.
100g Black Til.
50g of havan samaghree.
5 blocks camphor.
2 paper plates or Thari's
2 strands of kush grass.
1M - length twig with a white cloth wrapped at the tip.
100g ghee.
1 small steel dish.
1 tablespoon.

TILANJALI (OUTSIDE THE CREMATORIUM CHAMBER)

5 strands of kush grass.
1 plastic basin.
50g Black Til.
Flower petals.

COLLECTION OF THE ASHES

2m white calico cloth.
1 very large clay pot for the ashes.
½ lt milk
Matches, 1 piece of camphor

Gifts for the Mahaapatra

At the conclusion of the Dasgatra (10th day puja) ceremony various gifts are afforded to the presiding Mahaapatra. This is known as **PADA DAANA** and the items gifted are intended to serve the deceased during his/her journey to Yamaloka. These eight types of pada are identified in the Garuda Purana and are as follows. 1) one umbrella 2) one pair of shoes or sandals 3) a shirt or kurta top 4) one piece of gold 5) a water vessel like a clay pot 6) one stool 7) a vessel of black til 8) Food including 7 grains and SALT. You are most welcome to give him more gifts if you can afford it.

(NB:- Remember that the Mahapatra can't demand things according to his whims and fancies. And he shouldn't frighten you by saying if you don't give me this or that bad things will happen to you. Then he is a rascal and a cheat)

The Next part of our journey in Death is the following article called "The whole trip from the 13th day to the 361st day to Yamaloka". Here we discuss about what happens to the soul for the next 348 days until the soul reaches Yamaloka.

*** 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.***

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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 Shree Radha Krsna.

Compiled for the upliftment of Sanatan Dharma
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