



श्री सनातन धर्म सभा – दक्षिण आफ्रिका

Shree Sanathan Dharma Sabha of South Africa

Established 1941

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Funerals and related procedures

1. Important things to do.

1.1 The member of the family who undertakes to perform the rites should have his **head shaved**, he should dress in a white dhoti and kurta or in white pants and shirt after taking a bath. Other close relatives of the deceased must shave their heads on the 10th day.

1.2 The head of the corpse, if male, should be shaved and the corpse must be bathed.

1.3 If the deceased is male or a widow, the corpse must be dressed in new white clothing.

1.4 If the deceased is a female whose husband is alive, the corpse must be dressed in coloured clothing and the “maang” (parting of the hair) must be lined with sindoor.

1.5 After the corpse has been bathed, it should be smeared with ghee, thil and perfume/chundan; a flower garland must be placed around the neck.

1.6 If the deceased had been invested with the sacred thread, then a janaw should be put over the left shoulder and hanging under the right arm.

1.7 A tulsi leaf and a piece of gold is placed in the mouth of the deceased, and kusa under the body.

1.8 The coffin must be placed with the head in the north and the feet in the south. Place a lit diya (lamp), a bucket of water and light an agarbathee where the coffin is placed.

1.9 The person performing the last rites must prepare 6 pindas (rice balls – golf ball size) using rice flour, thil, milk, honey, sugar and ghee. These will be offered on the day of the funeral.

1.10 Sons should carry the coffin on their shoulders immediately prior to entering the cremation hall.

1.11 Just prior to cremation, circumambulate the corpse in a clockwise direction 7 times,

each time touching the head with the lit stick.

1.12 Whilst waiting for the ashes, offer thilanjali (palm full of water mixed with thil offered 3 times on a kusa planted into the ground). Then receive ashes and cast into river.

1.13 Return to home of the deceased: Performance of purificatory act of touching fire (which should have already been lit), water and iron with syringa leaves, sprinkle water on your body then have a bath; this is done by immediate members of the family returning from the cremation.

NOTE:

- At the home of the deceased: No food is cooked on the day of the funeral.
- For three evenings commencing on the evening after the funeral, place a glass of milk, a glass of water and light a diya the gate/entrance of the home.
- Sathwik food without oil and masala should be eaten for ten days by members of the family. A diya filled with oil and thil must be lit in the home. This diya must remain lit continuously for **twelve days** (when the sapindi ceremony has been completed).

1.14 The person who performed the last rites should sleep on the floor and should eat saltless food until the tenth day shraadh is completed.

1.15 At the home of the bereaved, the **Garuda Puraan (Preth Kaand) must be read** and discussed each evening from the day after the funeral to the 9th evening.

1.16 **A gphant**, with a lit lamp on it, is tied on the morning after the funeral and is maintained until the **10th day**. This is taken to the place (river) where the 10th day ceremony will be done.

A gphant is a clay pot with a hole at the bottom through which a string is passed in such a manner that the contents (a mixture of water, milk and thil) drips slowly onto a kusa that has been planted into the ground below it. The gphant must be maintained to ensure that it always has a sufficient quantity of the mixture in it.

1.17 Only members of the Kul (immediate family) should eat at this home during the sutak period which ends when the sapindi ceremony is completed.

1.18 Tenth day ceremony (count the day of the funeral as day one) The performer of the last rites must, bathe and perform the ceremony (generally at the riverside/ghat),

and thereafter **again, have his head** shaved, feed a mahapatra and give him daan. Other close family members should also have their heads shaved.

1.19 The 12th/13th day ceremonies are completed. Thereafter devpujan (Ganesh-Gauri, Kalash, Naugraha & Vishnu Puja) and Havan (Vishnusahasranaam havan is recommended) should be done. If death occurred in panchak then Panchak Shanthi Puja must also be done.

Please note that the practice of placing a **photograph (picture frame)** of the deceased on an altar and waiving an aarthi around this photograph is **NOT sanctioned** by the Sanathan scriptures. In as much as our parents and loved ones who have passed away are as dear to us as God, they are NOT God and therefore cannot be elevated to the status of God. We therefore appeal to followers of Sanathan Dharma to discontinue this practice.

1.20 If monthly pindas are not offered then 9 pindas are offered at the 6months ceremony & 7 pindas at the one-year ceremony giving a total of 16 pindas. The one year ceremony is done in the Hindi month in which death occurred. (If there is adhik maas during the course of the year, the one-year ceremony is done in the "13th month").

Editorial Committee

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