



THE PERFORMANCE OF LAST RITES FOR A SANATHAN FUNERAL

When performing the last rites of a loved one, the person performing the rituals must be:

- Clean shaven on the head and face.
- Dressed in a white kurta or dhoti or pants and shirt.
- Wearing their Janeu (if bestowed upon them in an Upanayana Sanskara) from the right shoulder to the left side. If there is no Janeu, then a white towel must be worn on the right shoulder.

The Deceased:

- Must be given a bath.
- Is smeared with a mixture of ghee and sesame seeds (thill).
- Is dressed in calico.
- If a male, is given a pagri (turban) and a Chandan dot on the forehead, with dotting from the top downwards.
- If a male that has been bestowed with Janeu, then a double Janeu is worn from the left shoulder to the right side.
- If a widow, is dressed in white clothing.
- If a married female, is dressed in colourful clothing, given by her side of the family. Sindhoor must be placed on her maang (Hair path) and a Khoicha made (A mirror and comb, rice, turf, a turmeric stick, a coin, and tikli tied into a hanky or plastic bag) and placed into the achra of the sari.
- Must be sprayed with favoured perfume or red scent may be sprinkled.
- Must have a thulsi leaf placed into each palm and one onto the base of their throat.
- Must be given a piece of gold, wrapped with a thulsi leaf and placed into the mouth.

Before placing the Deceased into the casket, the casket:

- Should preferably be new and not jootha (something used by another person).
- Must be lined with kusa leaves.
- Must have three garlands placed on top of the casket.

The Deceased should preferably be taken from the Mortuary to the crematorium.

If the Deceased is taken home, then:

- The Deceased must be placed in a North (head) to South (feet) position.
- A lota of water and a diya must be placed by the head of the casket. Incense sticks may be lit.

The Funeral Ceremony itself:

- The person performing the last rites must make the pindas themselves.
- A pinda is made from rice flour, thill, milk, honey, sugar and ghee. These ingredients must be mixed and then shaped into six golf ball sized offerings.
- Each pinda will be placed during the last rites process.
- After the first five pindas are offered, a hawaan is performed. Once this is completed, the sixth pinda is offered into the right hand of the Deceased.
- Finally, just before committing the Deceased into the furnace, navigate around the Deceased seven times, each time touching with fire and water.

Whilst waiting for ashes, Tilanjali puja is performed. This is also referred to as the first water for the soul and is done by facing south and offering palmfuls of water and thill three times onto a kusa knot planted into the ground.

What is done on the day after ash disposal:



- Before entering home, perform a purification act by touching fire, iron and water using a syringa leaf, sprinkling water over the body and having a pinch of sugar.
- The Sutak house (Funeral house) should not cook food. Food may be donated by other family members or friends.
- For the first three evenings post the disposal of ash, a glass of milk and a glass of water must be placed next to a lit clay lamp at the entrance to home.
- Another large diya is fill with ghee and thill and must remain lit for the next twelve or thirteen days, extinguished only upon the completion of the thirteenth day ceremony.

What is done for the days after the ash disposal:

- On the first morning after the ash disposal, the person performing last rites must perform the water offerings and thereafter offer saltless Uradhi Dhall and White Rice. A bite of the food must also be had after the offering.
- At home, the Garuda Puran should be read and discussed every evening until the tenth day ceremony.
- Sathwik food without oil and spice may be prepared for eating. If possible, the person performing last rites should try to have saltless food and must always eat first. Before eating, a bite of the food or drink must be taken out by the last rites performer and offered for the Deceased.
- Only members of the Kul (Immediate family) may eat at the Sutak House until the sapinda (thirteen-day ceremony) is performed.

On the Tenth Day Ceremony:

- It is important to note that ceremony dates are counted from the date of disposal of ash.
- The person that performed last rites as well as any other male members of the Kul will shave their heads again.
- The person doing last rites must feed a Mahapatra and give him Dhan.

On the thirteen Day ceremony:

- Sixteen pindas are offered.
- This is followed by the Sapinda ceremony in which five pindas are offered.

On the Six Month and One Year Ceremonies:

- Nine pindas are offered on the six-month ceremony and a further seven are offered on the one-year ceremony.

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