

## **Arsha Vidya Guide for declaration and handling the body of a sanyasi after mahasamadhi**

The purpose of this document is to guide Arsha Vidya Acharyas particularly Sannyasis so that they may guide their students and devotees about the time before death and handling the body after death. It is to minimise the conflict among the people left behind.

The following are sample documents and each Arsha Vidya Acharya may decide regarding finalisation of the same for himself/herself and accordingly inform their respective students and devotees.

This is merely a guide largely based for people in India and not a legally binding document on anyone. The respective country laws may need to be looked into before finalisation.

Annexure I - Guidelines for making a declaration regarding the body

Annexure II - Sample of Advance Medical Directive (Living will)

Based on the End of Life Care Model Bill 2019, the sample of living will is about the quality of care for the dying. Advance care wishes are valid but when notarized it also gains a legal validity. The family and friends would be bound to respect and carry on the end of life care without conflict and guilt. Also, it relieves the physicians of any clinical, moral or legal obligations.

Annexure III - Handling the body after death and Organising the shodashi

## **Annexure I. Guidelines for making a declaration regarding the body**

\*1.Preface\* I am .....

\*Sample .\*

This body is a vehicle for the journey of human pursuit. Once its purpose is served, it needs to be disposed off with minimum damage to the environment and least conflict among the people left behind. Personally, I am not particular about how it is done for this body. The purpose of the declaration is to minimise the conflict among the people associated with me in some manner.

**\*2.Appointment of a person responsible for arrangement after departure.\***

\*Sample\*

I appoint..... to take decision in this regard..If required he/she can consult 1.Swami .....,  
2.Swami.....

If appointed person Shri..... is not available for deciding then the chairman of or the manager of. ...name of the institute.....can decide in consultation with the abovementioned Swamijis.

**3 \*Options (Pick whichever is applicable)–**

\*Bhu samadhi (burying)

\*Jal samadhi (immersing in water) \*

\*or cremation in electric crematorium without any formal final rites

\*or donation of the body to the hospital.\*

\* Or donation of organs to the hospital

**4 Organ/body donation**

I wish to donate the following organs of my body/donate my entire body

.....

(Organs that can be donated within 4 – 24 hours - Cornea (eyes), Kidneys, Heart, Lungs, Liver, Pancreas, Skin). The next of kin will have to notify the hospital immediately so that the organs can be retrieved within a few hours. The different hours for retrieval of each organ is mentioned on the site. More details - <https://www.organindia.org/>

In advance, a donor card with a valid registration number may be obtained here - <https://www.organindia.org/claim-your-donor-card/>.

OR

The entire body can be donated to the Anatomy department of the hospital for dissection and related purposes. The NGO associated with the hospital will share a required form with a declaration, which is to be signed by the next of kin and submitted to the hospital.

It is understood that if the body has a major illness, the body will not be deemed fit to be donated.

#### **\*4 Giving flexibility to the person assigned\***

*\*Sample.\**

These are simply the suggestions. If some other option is found more practical by the person assigned then that can be followed without any reluctance and all others, should cooperate with him/her in carrying out that option.

#### **5 \*Suggestions regarding shodashi annual ceremony\***

*\*Sample\** I am not particular about Shodashi etc. It is not required for me but if people decide to do so it can be done for their satisfaction as per the convenience of the management. No yearly function is required. Even from a religious angle, since I have already done all karma for myself by myself before taking sanyasa. For a Mahatma like Pujya Swamiji it is useful as it inspires people and gives opportunity to come together and share one's experience.

#### **6 \*Spirit of the note\***

The spirit of this note is to smoothen the process of the disposal of the body without any conflict and not to assert any of my wish..my freedom doesn't depend on the way body is disposed off.

Love to all.

Signed

Date

Place

## **Annexure II. ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVE (LIVING WILL) AND HEALTH CARE POWER-OF-ATTORNEY AUTHORISATION**

This Declaration on My Life is made by me, .....

Date of Birth: .....

resident of .....

on Date..... at .....place,  
India.

I am an adult,.....years of age, of sound mind and am making this 'declaration' of my own free will, ie voluntarily and after careful consideration. I have received all information relevant to making this declaration and fully understand it as well as the consequences of this declaration.

If the time comes that I can no longer take part in decision-making regarding my medical treatment, this 'declaration' will comprise the final expression of my wishes. It is requested that all concerned should take these wishes into account before taking any medical decision regarding my life.

If at any time, I

1. Reach the stage of terminal illness and go into a coma with no reasonable expectation of regaining consciousness, or
2. Have a disease state from which I have no reasonable expectation of recovering with a quality of life that I would deem acceptable, or
3. Reach a persistent vegetative stage with no reasonable expectation of regaining significant cognitive functioning

then the following wishes should be considered. If in the event of any of the above, I should be deemed .....(to have declined) to receive the following life sustaining treatments as listed below.

Any of these measures already started, should be removed.

1. Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation
2. Any Intravenous fluids except electrolytes, antibiotics and blood products (if essential to make end of life comfortable)
3. Dialysis
4. Artificial respiration or respiratory assistance

5. Chemotherapy
6. Radiotherapy
7. Artificial feeding by nasogastric tube or gastrostomy

Other wishes: . I do not wish to die in an ICU/HDU, and would like to be shifted to private room or a hospice environment will be preferable, where students and friends can come freely, where I would like to receive treatment to make my departure from the body as pain-free as possible.

I request that this ‘declaration’ should be honoured by my students and family members and physicians as the final expression of my legal right to refuse medical or surgical treatment accepting the consequences of such refusal. This document may be communicated to my regular physician, ....., or to any other physician who is likely to treat me.

To secure compliance with this declaration, to make medical decisions as may be

required from time to time on my behalf, I hereby name the following:

-

1. Name
2. Name
3. Name
4. Name

as my Surrogate decision maker/s or Health Care Power-of-Attorney. They have expressed acceptance of this responsibility. Depending on availability, one of the following, in the following sequence, will be my surrogate decision maker/s or health care Power-of-Attorney. I hereby vest in my healthcare attorney the power to obtain medical information, make decisions and take action on my behalf with regard to wishes expressed in this ‘declaration’, notwithstanding any contrary views held by any other person.

1. Name:.....  
Signature

Date of Birth:

Phone:

Email:

Resident of:

If this person is not available, the next two persons may be approached in the same order

2. Name:

(Date of Birth): ..

Phone:

Email:

Resident of :

3. Name:.....

Signature

Date of Birth:

Phone:

Email:

Resident of:

4. Name:.....

Signature

Date of Birth:

Phone:

Email:

Resident of:

In the absence of any of these authorized healthcare attorneys, any other student or member of my family will have the authority to express the wishes on my behalf regarding the above treatment.

In the absence of any authorized healthcare attorneys or family members, I authorise my treating team of healthcare professionals to take medical decisions in accordance with the wishes expressed in this 'declaration'.

I declare that this 'Declaration' and 'Attorney Authorization' shall remain in force during my life time unless I revoke it at any time and until notice of its revocation has been received by my attorneys.

I understand full importance and consequences of this 'Declaration' and 'Attorney Authorization' and am fully competent to make it.

SIGNATURE

DATE..... PLACE.....

WITNESSES:

This 'Declaration' and 'Attorney Authorization' has been signed in the presence of undersigned by Swami..... who is known to me and I believe that the signatory is of sound mind.

Witness I.

Name: Signature  
Address

Witness II.

Name: Signature  
Address

SIGNED BEFORE ME

APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY, STAMP ( could be Judicial Magistrate of First Class or Notary)

### **Annexure III. Handling the body of a sannyasi and organising Shodashi**

In the Vedic tradition, the Mahatma was showed respect while living and even after death is considered 'Pujya' as he/she inhabited the body made of panchamahabhutas. While there are no vidhi-nisheda for a Mahatma, we follow the tradition and convention of showing respect to the Mahatma and hence his/her body. The normal way of handling the body of a sanyasi is to do bhusamadhi or jalasamadhi.

Bhusamadhi is possible if the sanyasi/sanyasini has an ashram set up and adequate place for bhusamadhi. Police permission will have to be sought for bhu-samadhi.

For bhusamadhi and jalasamadhi, the body has to be made in sitting position immediately after its fall. Jalasamadhi is not possible in Rishikesh in view of the prohibition of it. The only alternative is agnisamadhi. For this the body has to be in lying posture.

In case of organ donation, after the body is returned from the hospital, purvangas including a shodasha-upachaara puja may be performed.

Whatever be the type of samadhi, there are certain purvangas which is common to all of them.

1. The body is placed in a hall or room with a dipa lighted up and head facing south. Kathopanishad First Chapter with three vallis and Gita Chapter 8 can be chanted continuously. If there is lot of time left, entire Bhagavad Gita can be chanted.
2. The body is wrapped in ochre robe (if not already in ochre robe) and shodashopacara puja is done. It can be done by the close disciple of the brahmalina swamiji/swaminiji. The puja vidhi mentioned in the gurupada puja booklet can be followed or Purushasukta vidhana can be adopted. All the abhishekams can be done to the chanting of Rudram. New Vastras, rudrakshamalas, flower garland etc can be offered and arati shown. Thereafter the other disciples and devotees can offer their respects by placing flowers on the body.
3. Once the puja is over, the body is placed on the wooden structure and carried to the cremation ground and offered to the fire. One can take some token sandal wood sticks and place in the pyre. Every disciple and devotee can place a piece of wood in the pyre as his or her participation.



The pundits will organise for pindadanam etc which we can politely dismiss.

4. Next day, the ashes can be collected and offered in holy rivers.

In the case of bhusamadhi, the body is dropped in the pit after puja and large quantities of fragrant materials like vibhuti, camphor, chandan and camphor can be dropped over the body and the pit is filled with sand.

The pit should be adequately deep so that the top of the body is two feet below the earth. If the body is in lying posture, the body can be placed in the pit in standing posture tied to the wooden structure by digging a deep pit. A structure is built over the samadhi where a tulasi plant or lingam can be established. Everyday a light has to be lighted up in the samadhi area.

Where jalasamadhi is possible, the body is placed in a wooden box with many holes on all sides and filled with stones (so that the box will not float and go down to the bottom). It is then taken in a boat to the middle of the river and dropped. Every disciple and devotee can place a stone in the box.

Electronic footage – It is likely that students and devotees will want to share photographs and videos of the last darshan of the Mahatma. To avoid chaos and maintain some decorum, someone from the appointed group may look into deputing one-two people to organise minimal photography and few video glimpses, which may be circulated. Some sensitivity may be maintained in all not seeking to use their mobile phones to get all possible footage. Alternatively in keeping with the wishes of the Mahatma, live streaming of the key functions may be done for all.

## **Organising Shodasi**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> day, the tradition is to offer a shodasi bhiksha to learned mahatmas. The organisers can choose sanyasis depending on the closeness to the Brahmalina Mahatma. There is no discrimination in the choice of male or female Sanyasi in the Arsha Vidya tradition.

The gift of sixteen items to be offered to each Mahatma can be chosen from the suggested list attached based on what is useful to the Mahatmas in their daily life depending on the region where the shodashi is performed. Before the bhiksha, a puja is done to the image of the Brahmalina Mahatma.

The invited Mahatmas are seated on a nice asanam and they are offered, chandanam, flower garland and rudraksha garland (if available). Then affordable dakshina is given along with the gift bag.

After the chanting of Bhagavad Gita Ch 15, the bhiksha is started. Where possible the food items served also can be sixteen. The sponsors of the shodasi can go around the mahatmas and offer salutations to them.

Some examples are - Bag, Shawl, umbrella, socks, Asana, Hot water kettle, vastram, plate with cups etc, torch light, Gita book, Bed Sheet, head phone, magnifying glass, back scratcher, USB port, first aid kit, toilet pouch, book stand, etc