

Vedic Farewell Service for the Souls
आत्मोद्धाराय सेवायै वैद्विकोऽन्तिमसंस्कारः ।

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A Vedic guide to bestowing services
& the purifying sacraments
for easy transcendence.

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Vrajendrasuta Dāsa
(*nanda gautam*)

Upgraded edition of the Vedic bestowing services & the ultimate
purifying sacraments including the deity worship; with the
authentic Sanskrit verses and its Romanized text; dovetailed to
perform it as the loving devotional service to the
Supreme Personality of Godhead,
Kṛṣṇa.

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Any comments and suggestions will be highly appreciated.

First printing in 2022.

Printed at and published by: U2Pi uitgeverij bv.

The Hague, The Netherlands.

[www. uitgeverijU2pi.nl](http://www.uitgeverijU2pi.nl) [www. kelbo.nl](http://www.kelbo.nl)

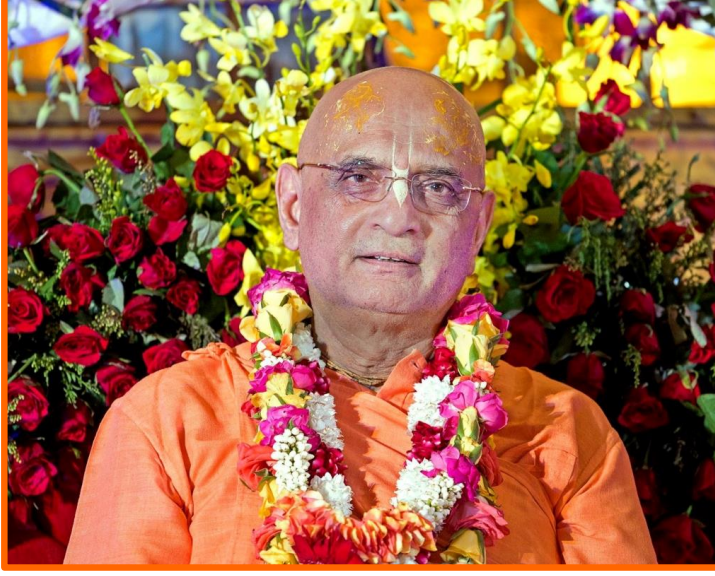
ISBN: 978 94 9329 9245

Price: 32 Euro

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Dedication



*This book of Vedic farewell service for the soul
compiled from the relevant Vedic wisdom
is dedicated to my glorious Spiritual Master
His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swāmi Māhārāj,
an esteemed disciple of His Divine Grace
Abhay Charaṇ Bhakti Vedānta Swāmi Prabhupāda,
the Founder Ācārya of the
International Society for Krishna Consciousness
who practically exemplified to the world citizens
how to live and how to leave perfectly
in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.*

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānānjana-śalakayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I sincerely bow with respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my Spiritual Master and to all the *Vaishnavas*.

Preamble- the inspiration

With great reverence at heart, I, a fallen soul, bow down unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami Māhārāj and unto all the Vaisnavas. Though having listened to theirs enlightening explanations of the Vedic statements of truth; that we the individuals are souls proper in the absolute reality, conditioned to the bodily concept of life is making difficult to dovetail myself with the consciousness of God, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To overcome the failures in the loving devotional service to God Kṛṣṇa and liberate from the repeating cycle of birth, aging, deceased and dying, the Vedic culture provides some alternatives; a few to mention are such as the bestowing sacraments and the *saṁskāras*.

‘The Krishna consciousness movement is essential in human society, for it offers the highest perfection of life. This is so explained fully in the Bhagavad Gita As It Is edition’, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder Acārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness writes in its preface. His society is gradually spiritualizing the entire world with the devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa. Yet, Srila Prabhupada, out of immense compassion to the fallen souls, lamented; ‘There is so much to do, but I have become so sick I am not able to do anything¹’. My spiritual master His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami present at that very moment assured Srila Prabhupada that Srila Prabhupada’s achievements for the welfare of the entire entities is inconceivable and unprecedented, Srila Prabhupada assumed it was only 50%. Because not everyone will become devotees, like whoever comes under his society, ISKCON and surrender to Kṛṣṇa, the other 50% Srila Prabhupada wished is for those who will not, to situate them in the proper human culture- the *varṇāśrama-dharma*. This my spiritual master His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaj recalls in his book, The Ocean of Mercy. Vedic Saṁskāra- the gradual purificatory procedures observed from pre-conception of a child to a series of bestowing sacraments before and after death forms the essential part of the *Varnāśrama-dharma*; for the gradual elevation to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

As death is inevitable for all living beings, the soul leaves the body compelled by the laws of nature at the time of death and that experience as odious and agonizing even long time thereafter, is a fearful truth². Vedic literature

¹ *Ocean of Mercy* by His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaj, 2016, p198, ISBN:978-0-89213-5336.

² *Bhagavatam* 3.30.16-18

informs us that only the self-realized liberated souls have the power to experience death without anxiety¹. God consciousness can be awakened also within few seconds before death. This book illustrating the bestowing services and the purifying sacraments to dovetail the dying person's consciousness to God realization intends to contribute towards fulfilling that wish of Srila Prabhupada to help those not yet fully engaged in the loving devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Let the life after death of everybody attains the highest destination, the abode of the Supreme Personality of God.

The process to attain that abode and its advantages are explained by the Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in the Bhagavad Gita², 8.5 & 8.16 and therefore this endeavour involving bestowing sacraments and *sankirtan* are the prescribed requisite for those who has difficulties earlier to practice those processes.

When Vaisnava priest is not available for such bestowing sacraments, Srila Prabhupada advised in the purport to Sṛīmad Bhagavatam 5.7-6 to engage *Karma-kanda* priest and ask him to dovetail it for the satisfaction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa. How to perform the Vedic bestowing sacraments (*dānādi-karma*), particularly those prescribed to do at least when someone is about to die and then soon after death, is explained in this book if in case the priest concerned is not in good book to dovetail it in the loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord. If the person in his or hers last stage of living is not a devotee, in the sense at least have no yet initiation taken under one of the Four bonafide *Vaisnava sampradaya* through a bona-fide spiritual master of such disciplic succession, the bestowing sacraments would help them alleviate to the highest destination. That will be an appropriate Vedic farewell service for the soul.

Though it is new in view of its integrated deity worship wisdom, Sanskrit text and its Romanized version, and the simplified layout, to avail one in the flood of numerous books on rituals and *samkāras* is my thankless effort. But, with the use of this handbook, the bestowing sacraments at the final stage of living and after death can be conducted very easily by the householders

¹ *Coming Back*, p118. AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, ISBN 0-89213-114-4

² *Bhagavad Gita* chapter 8 verse 5 & 16 -

And whoever, at the of his life, quits his body remembering Me alone at once attains my nature, Of this there is no doubt. From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death takes place. But one who attains my abode, O son of Kunti, never takes birth again.

themselves albeit a learned *brāhmāna* or devotees are not readily available during such crucial moment. It presents authentic approaches to deity worship while bestowing cow, giving in charity or endowments and essentially how to do the farewell service to the departed soul. Though it may appear less important for the devotees' use, it would be useful to help the dying person attain the spiritual destination that may or may not be a devotee on earth at that time.

If this compilation somehow contributes to fulfil the aspirations of the *Vranāsrāma-dharma* in the way Srila Prabhupada wished for, I will feel blessed by this service.

Hare Kṛṣṇa
Servant of the servants
Vrajendrasuta Dāsa (nanda gautam)
The Netherlands

Introduction- the purpose

Expired! That means the timespan allotted by providence to the living entity concerned comes to its end. Even the non-living material structures like electric bulbs, machines and buildings have its timespan and commodities have its expiry date. For humans naturally that end of the given time is the death. The spiritual viewpoint of death is of the body only, whose soul has gone out of the old and useless body towards a new body.

The wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita equips us to face what is inevitable to happen is only to our bodies, and that at our absolute core, we are souls that lives eternally. Seen in this light, death is not a termination but a transition. Where do we go after death? This is determined by how we live and how we leave- by the consciousness we have at the time of death, which in turn is determined by the consciousness we cultivate throughout our life¹. If one leaves his body remembering God undoubtedly his ultimate destination will be the abode of God (Bhagavad Gita 8.5).

Humans have the utility power to dovetail their life on whose purpose to live and on which attachment to die- as in the epic Rāmāyān, Vibhīṣana lived in devotion risking his life for the sake of the Lord Ram, Jātāyu died for the sake of the Lord. Mārīci and others also risked their lives but not for the sake of the Lord but in attachment other than the absolute. Therefore, while doing any activities; it must be performed with a favourable disposition towards pleasing the Lord. That service oriented lovable attitude in action intended to please the Lord is the devotional service- *Bhakti*. The Vedic literature, particularly the Garuḍa pūrāṇ has specific segments that offer not the alternatives to bhakti, but the last chance to attain God realization at best, or ease after-death journey at worst, for those not yet has been engaged in the loving devotional service.

Death is a journey, for which a lot of preparations must be procured on time, and that preparation determines next step; whether one must tread by foot or embark on celestial planes. The Buddhist in the Himalayan region, recite their holy text like *Kājur-tenjur* for the welfare of the dying person and perform *rimdo* rituals after death. Similarly, the Christians would perform 'Viaticum', a holy communion administered to someone who is dying². The followers of Islam would recite their holy Quoran in such a formidable situation. For those of us in the *Sanātan-dhārma*; the eternal religion,

¹ Magazine Back to Godhead March/April 2020

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_rites

commonly known currently as Hindu, there is the Bhagavad Gita the revealed aphorism spoken directly by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa. In addition to this there are Four Vedas, eighteen pūrāṇa, Rāmāyān and Māhābharata that imparts knowledge of self-realization and therefore, the liberation, (moksha) from suffering¹. If reciting any one of these vast scope of Vedic literatures for liberation of the dying person is according to time, place and circumstances not probable, then at least chanting the Māhā-mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇā Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare. Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare is the best to do collectively and individually. This alone can give liberation to the dying or the dead persons' soul².

Given that not everybody would live in devotion or elevate themselves to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and risks to fall back into the vicious material cycle of sufferings, the journey after death to receive the verdict for the next life can be less painful by means of the Vedic bestowing sacraments. Someone of the dying person's family has to conduct many sacraments to help the departing soul while most of it should be done by the individual concerned before the life's deadline. The necessity of such sacraments depends on the intensity of the individual's materialistic conditioning, in contrast to spiritualists who lives in devotion have their journey arranged by themselves comfortably to the highest destination.

Although each ethnic communities everywhere have their own ceremonial guidelines to help the dying person, albeit the departing soul, almost all such guidelines are written by the priestly class to be used by the same class of men. Therefore, such guidebooks have its standard and presentation that is difficult for the spiritual practitioners of other classes of the communities. The attempt here is to make at least one, simplified, Romanized and educative guidebook that can be easily put into practice by any spiritual practitioners, at least to help someone at the crucial moment. For those in need of this guide to perform ultimate service – a Vedic farewell service for the soul, as the title is, it should be noted that it is not meant to replace the duty of a priestly class if men or their's presence for advice. The company of a brāhmaṇa especially a Vaisnava brāhmaṇa at the time of death and his service is considered the most beneficial.

¹ *Readings in Vedic Literature, the tradition speaks for itself*, by Satsarūpa dasa Goswāmi
ISBN 0-912776-88-9

² *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam 1.2.17 compiled in the book: Nāmāmṛta* by Subhānanda dāsa, p335,
BBT 1982

The possible hospice care at home in view of the Vedic conjunction, in order to prepare conducive environment for the dying person, gives essential aid to his or her's after-death journey. The etiquettes which are required to observe by the individuals before and for the family member concerned after death forms the main explanations of this book. Perhaps it may appear a *karma-kāṇḍa* approach in the vision of the Vaisnavas but factually what is compiled here and presented; is to help the other fifty percent Srīla Prabhupada wished; for those who is not living and leaving in devotion, to bring them close to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, as a last attempt indeed.

Hare Kṛṣṇa

Sanskrit in Roman letters pronunciation guide.

The following chapters in this guidebook have the relevant verses from the books of the Vedic wisdom. Those verses are written in *Devanāgarī* script and its *Romanized Sanskrit* so that it could be useable also by anyone either well versed or not in *Devanāgarī* script.

Throughout the ages, the Sanskrit language has been written in different alphabets. The text, most widely used in India and Nepal is called *devanāgarī*, literally means the writing used in ‘the cities of demigods’. The *devanāgarī* alphabet consists of 48 characters, 13 vowels and 35 consonants. Sanskrit grammarians arranged this alphabet according to practical linguistic principles, and this order has been accepted by the Westerns scholars. The system of transliteration used in this book also conforms to a system that scholars have accepted to indicate the pronunciation of each Sanskrit sound¹. The alphabetical symbol in English that corresponds to Sanskrit sound configured here under is widely used in the books of His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Vowels	अ a	आ ā	इ i	ई ī
	उ u	ऊ ū	ऋ ṛ	ए e
ऐ ai	ओ o	औ au	अं an̄	अः ḥ

These vowels are also written combining in fraction with the consonants as follows:

ा ā	ि i	ी ī	ु u	ू ū
े e	ै ai	ो o	ौ au	ृ ṛ, ॠ ṛ
ँ m̄	: ḥ	श्री śrī	ॐ om	ऽ ay

Examples of vowels written with the consonants, as with the first letter ‘ka’ क

क	का	कि	की	कु	कू	के	कै	को	कौ	कं	कः	कृ
ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū	ke	kai	ko	kau	km̄	kaḥ	kr̄

Consonants

Gutturals:	क ka	ख kha	ग ga	घ gha	ङ ṇa
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¹ Excerpt from *Bhagavad Gita As It Is* by His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Palatals:	च ca	छ cha	ज ja	झ jha	ञ ña
Cerebrals:	ट ṭa	ठ ṭha	ड ḍa	ढ ḍha	ण ṇa
Dentals:	त a	थ tha	द da	ध dha	न na
Labials:	प pa	फ pha	ब ba	भ bha	म ma
Semivowel	य ya	र ra	ल la	व va	
Sibilants	श śa	ष ṣa	स sa		
Aspirate	ह ha	ढ ḍa	ड़ ḍha	क्ष akśa	त्र tra
	ज्ञ jña	ॠ Anusarga	ऌ visarga	ँ Chandrabindu	ॐ om

Some consonants like akśa क्ष and tra त्र are combined by two letters as its sound indicates. Om ॐ has three letters combinations: a-ū-m̐

The vowel 'a' is implied after a consonant with no vowel symbol.

The virama symbol indicates that there is no vowel after the consonant, eg. क्

The Sanskrit 'य' symbol indicates a combined sound 'a' & 'ya' for example जलेऽस्मिन् jaleāsmin.

The vowels are pronounced as follows:

a – as in but	r – as in rim
ā – as in as in bath	ṛ – as in reed
i – as in pin	e – as in they
ī – as in peep	ai – as in aisle
u – as in push	o – as in go
ū – as in ruled	au – as in how

The consonants are pronounced as follows:

Gutturals; pronounced from the throat.

k – as in kite
kh – as in Eckhart
g – as in give
gh – as in dig-hard
ṇ – as in sing

Palatals; pronounced with the middle of the tongue against the palate.

c – as in chair
ch – as in staunch-heart
j – as in joy
jh – as in hedgehog
ñ – as in canyon

Cerebrals; pronounced with the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth.

ṭ – as in tub
ṭh – as in light-heart
ḍ – as in dove
ḍh – as in red-hot

ṇ – as in ignore

Dentals; pronounced like cerebral but with the tongue against the teeth.

t – as in with

th – as in **ther**mometer

d – as in **th**us

Labials; pronounced with the lips.

p - as in **p**anama

ph – as in **ph**armacy

b – as in **b**ird

bh – as in ru**b**-hard

m – as in **m**other

Sibilants

ś – as in **s**peech

ṣ – as in **sh**ine

s – as in **s**un

Aspirate:

h – as in **h**ome

There is no accentuation of syllables in Sanskrit or pausing between words in a line.

n – as in **n**ut

Semivowels:

y – as is **y**es

r – as in **r**un

l – as in **l**ove

v – as in **v**owels

Anusvāra: ṁ - a resonant nasal sound
as in mum**my**

Visarga:

ḥ – as in a final **h** sound as in **ah**!

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*anta-kāle ca mam eva, smaraṇ muktva kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṁ, yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ*
And whoever, at the time of death, quits his body,
remembering Me alone, at once attains My nature.

Of this there is no doubt.

Bhagvad Gīta-As It Is; chapter 8 verse 5

CHAPTER ONE

Obligations at times of the life's precarious phase

anta-kāle-kartavyam अन्तकाले कर्तव्यम्

Hari-nāmākṣara-yuktam bhāle gopī-mṛḍāṅkitam

Tulasī-malikoraksam spr̥ṣeyur na yamodbhataḥ

‘Those whose body is adorned with tilaka or gopi-candana,
and marked all over with the holy names of the Lord,
and whose neck and chest is adorned with tulasī-mālā
will never be approached by the Yamadūtas’

(Skanda purāṇa)

PART 1. Brief introduction to the bestowing sacraments prior to death.

The above statement from the holy scripture- the *Skandha-purāṇa* commands the individuals to take up in advance the safety measures against being drawn by the agents of the Lord of death- *Yāmarāj*, towards the hellish way at death. This is particularly relevant to individuals who are conditioned, materialistic and void of spiritual consciousness. Therefore the Knowledge of such an appropriate measures is required to cultivate either by reading the related scriptures or by listening to the spiritual masters of the disciplic successions so that when someone in the family is likely to expire sooner then what may usually happen, such safety measures be executed. Spiritualists, on the contrary, who engage themselves to the loving devotional service to the Supreme, may have elevated themselves to higher consciousness practicing the dictum of the Vedic scriptures as mentioned above.

Within the material body, there is the spirit soul. There are two kinds of bodies; a gross body made of five gross elements and a subtle body made of three subtle elements¹. The gross body is composed of the elements of the material nature namely earth, water, air, fire and ether. The subtle body is a combination of the mind, intelligence and the false ego. The ego of identifying the self as the body is false because the body is different and separate from the self- known better as the soul which makes the body alive and conscious.

Due to the materialistic conditioning, or being devoid of self-realization, the soul gets intact with the subtle body and identifies itself as the gross body, even after death. Such a body will be taken to the abode of *Yamaraj* by the *Yāmadutas* to determine the consequential to his actions and its reactions. The road to that abode is called *Yāmā-mārga*, very miserable one, the *Yamādūtas* take along severely punishing on every step. This is so explained in the *Garuḍ-pūrāṇ* *uttar-khanda* chapters. The same chapters explains that if the dead one was a pious, not sinful, and has conducted the necessary bestowing sacraments such as giving in charity, then they treat him or her on the way quite friendly.

For the self-realized ones who elevates himself to God consciousness and engages in the loving devotional service to the Lord, they doesn't identify themselves as the gross body and the subtle body transforms into its constitutional position (*svārūpa*); the servitorship² of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa. That is the liberated state from the material attachments and qualifies for admission into the spiritual planetary residence of God. At death of such liberated individuals, the agents of the Lord Vishnu would take them away on the celestial planes. The evidences of such a divine transcendence is given in the *śrīmad Bhagavad Purāṇ*- Canto Six, for instance of Ajāmila who on his maturity of the loving devotion he gave up his material body at the bank of the river Ganga and boarded on the airplane to the heavenly paradise³. When there is no attachment to the gross body the subtle body would be transforms into the spiritual body. That is the most ideal, one has to aspire, and thus the goal of the human form of life will be accomplished.

¹ *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Canto Seven- The science of God, chapter 7 verse 23.

dehas tu sarva-saṅghāto jagat tasthur iti dvidhā
atraiva mṛgyaḥ puruṣo neti netīty atat tyajan

² *śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta*- Madhyalila chapter 20 verse 108.

jīvera 'svarūpa' haya kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'
kṛṣṇera 'taṭasthā-śakti' 'bhedābheda-prakāśa'

³ *śrīmad Bhagavad Purāṇ*- Canto Six, chapter Two, verse 43 & 44.

In view of this possible after death scenario, one has to consider the prescriptions of the scriptures whenever someone in the family is likely to expire sooner than normally may happen, because not everyone may have become a successful spiritualist. A good fund of knowledge is required from the Vedic literature to deal with the situation and do what is essential and helpful for the dying person. Naturally, nobody wants anyone's miserable death and intelligent ones would think beyond the death- to help attain liberation.

Similarly, in the Garuḍ purana, the Lord Hari says: 'individuals relating with their karma leave the body. At that time smear cow dung on the clean surface on earth and lay dying person there after spreading some sesame and kūsa grass. On the mouth put a piece of gold and place Tulasi and Salagram deity near that body. Then chant from Sām-Veda the sūktas¹- *Hare Krishna Māhāmantra*. This means the death is the final exam of life, to pass it successfully many preparations has to be done. Even after death the concerned relatives has to do a lot. A set of such helpful tips are mentioned in the following chapters. When the expiry is nearing, a number of bestowing sacraments are recommended in the Garuḍa-pūrana such as bestowing a cow for atonement against any sins and offenses of the person concerned. Such bestowing ceremonies will aid in various ways during the life after death.

The Garuḍ-pūran on which this compilation is based upon emphasizes to call upon the holy name of the Lord Vishnu/ Kṛṣṇa, ultimately at this modern age means the māhā-mantra in which the holy names of their Lordship Hari or Kṛṣṇā, Rām and their potency Hara is constituted into sixteen syllable hymn. The absolutely essential service is that which awakens in the dying person the God consciousness; that he or she should be able to remember and call upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, his forms and pastimes at the last breath. For anyone who quits the body in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is at once transferred to the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa². Therefore help the dying person remember Kṛṣṇa at the time of leaving behind the body by chanting the māhā-mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare. Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. Here this māhā-mantra is asserted in all circumstance while performing the bestowing ceremonies. It is done on the strength of its distinctive feature,

¹ *Garuḍ pūraṇ, uttar-khaṇḍa, chapter 5, verse 6-8 20* कर्मयोगतदा देही मुञ्चत्यत्रनिजं वपुः। तदा भूमिगतं कुर्याद् गोमयेनोपलिप्य च ।। तिलान्दर्भान् बिकीर्याथ मुखे स्वर्णं विनिक्षिपेत् ।तुलसीसन्निधौ कृत्वा शालग्रामशिलां तथा ।। एवं सामादि सूक्तैश्च मरणं मुक्तिदायकम् । शलाकास्वर्णविक्षेपः प्रेतप्राणगृहेषु च ।। गरुडपुराण उत्तरखण्ड ५:८-२०

² *Bhagavad Gita As It Is, chapter 8 verse 5 purport by Srila Prabhupada.*