

# FUNERARY RITES

## A sacred ritual for aiding the soul in its passage

by Mara'akame Deanna Jenné

*Each culture has its own unique name for the essential nature that makes one a human being and provides a blueprint for one's life. In Judeo-Christian settings this essential nature, that continues on through eternity, is called the "soul". In Nahua and Huichol traditions of Mexico the soul aspect is known as one's "tonalli". Other traditions, such as Buddhism, refer to this as one's "essential nature". The spirit is something else, animating life through its "life-force energy", which is called "prana" in the Hindu tradition, "holy spirit" in Christianity, "Chi" in Eastern Traditions and "kupari" in the Huichol tradition.*

### The Context for Funerary Rites

**Benefitting the Deceased:** While among the living, we are accustomed to directing our minds toward specific objectives and to navigate this three-dimensional reality from within a physical form. But these capacities are no longer supported in the etheric landscape after death. The tonalli or soul, now absent from both physical and mental constraints, may experience disorientation and confusion for a period of time because it does not recognize where it is. You may say that death can be a chaotic experience placing the soul in a "holding place" which in our most known Judea-Christian tradition, is referred to as a state of limbo and sometimes purgatory. Limbo is simply a realm beyond this physical realm, where a soul purification and reconciliation process of one's life occurs. This soul transformation occurs in all traditions.

Funerary rites provide a stabilizing intervention for the soul. With initiation into the pathways of the soul, and years of experience, most traditions have specialists who are able to locate, connect with and guide the soul of the deceased. This way of intervening was and still is in intact traditions, a known necessity for the soul's healthy and important transition into the realm of the ancestors. The escort first meets and then introduces the deceased soul to the intention of helping escorting them through their reconciliation process, out of the state of limbo and on to the glorious journey through realms beyond this realm to the soul's ancestral "homelands". No matter what beliefs, spiritual or religious practices the deceased engaged in, unless they had achieved spiritual enlightenment, they will go through a "multi-entity/form" experience before they get to their final resting place. Communication, healing, learning and re-direction of the soul is pursued, once stabilization occurs and before arriving at the desired destination of the Portal of the Ancestors.

**Benefitting Relatives and Friends:** Throughout history often elaborate rituals and protocols have been employed to support the bereaved in addressing the reality of death. Funerary rites, in its two day and night process, can provide a supportive setting for loved ones to say goodbye, grieve together and find solace knowing their beloved as moved on. By embracing the experience of loss, releasing unresolved hurts and by opening to a new chapter in life, often feeling an unfamiliar emptiness, healing can begin. As part of the funerary process, the guide serves those in attendance by providing counsel and a supportive healing environment.

**Benefitting the Greater Community:** Funerary rites are one of the most influential and essential rituals in the cycle of life, from birth to death. The significance of these rites is especially profound when considering a spiritually vibrant indigenous culture, where these rites have played a central role in sustaining their connection to their spiritual tradition over thousands of years.<sup>4</sup> The spiritual strength of an indigenous people is advanced through the reincarnation of ancestral souls returning “home” to their original, native environment. To merge back into one’s ancestral community is to embody health, wholeness and harmony. Funerary rites foster an ongoing revitalization of the seed of a people’s spiritual tradition enhancing an ever-deepening association with the Dream of Nature. In summary, funerary rites are employed to benefit the passage of the soul, to aid relatives and friends in embracing life’s natural cycle, and to strengthen the spiritual vibrancy and continuity of a people.

**Recovering Wholeness:** The backlash of modernity, of not having maintained effective funerary rites, is that humans have become largely a world culture of “mutts”<sup>5</sup>, mixed soul parts from many cultures and traditions. This phenomenon has brought about confusion for many western peoples. There is a sense of lack because of the natural cumulative and coherent wisdom of the ancestors. Some hold that this dissociated amalgam of the soul’s makeup has caused us to lose our sense of belonging (i.e. being valued) within contemporary society. This world is, as a result, crowded with a dissociated humanity that relies on the fallibility of mind, wits and brawn instead of on the unerring movements of nature, healthy ancestors and divine presence which guide humanity to fulfill our individual’s life purpose. *Funerary rites serve to reverse a long-standing and devastating pattern of human suffering.*

### **The Ritual Unfolding of These Rites**

*These funerary rites are nonsectarian and are intended to serve a wide spectrum of people. They are particularly beneficial where funeral rituals are not or minimally practiced, or have lost their authentic capacity to serve the deceased and the bereaved.*

Funerary rites are conducted five (5) days following the date of death with another opportunity appearing forty (40) days after death. These are the two most propitious times when the etheric doorway to the soul of the deceased is primed to open and for the guide to locate the soul and aid in its transition away from earthly engagement, through the afterlife dimensions and toward the Portal of the Ancestors. Other doorways that can lead to contacting the soul is their birthday, the time of the veil thinning around the Day of the Dead, Oct. 30-Nov. 3rd.

It is highly recommended that the funerary rites take place at the deceased’s home.<sup>6</sup>

## **Day 1**

This day is given over first to preparing an altar with a white flower bouquet, mementos of the deceased, photos and a long-burning candle and to assembling the loved one's favorite foods. The altar candle is lit to begin the ritual. An evening meal after sunset commences involving family and friends along with the attending Mara'akame (Guide). This meal is in honor of the departed with a seat and a place setting for him or her at the table. After dinner, the plate of those foods shared and eaten by everyone present, is placed on the altar. Following the meal a communal fire is held or a candle is lit in the center of the living room where the altar is, for everyone present to share memories and anecdotes of the deceased.

Around midnight, the guide begins a vigil for the delicate task of engaging the Tonalli. Once the connection is made, the shaman provides uniquely personal counsel and guidance to assist the soul's movement through the after-life realms until reconciliation is complete and the Portal of the Ancestors has been reached. This sacred work lasts through the night, commencing before dawn.

## **Day 2**

On the second day, participants are encouraged to go about their normal routines without attention on the previous night's endeavors. But on the evening of the second day, another gathering with the guide takes place either in the living room around a candle or at a consecrated fire. At this time, the guide proceeds to tell the sacred journey recounting the saga of the soul's journey from the previous evening's vigil. The shaman may also deliver messages from the deceased to family members and friends.

### **Arranging for Funerary Rites**

There are three ways for the delivery of these rites to be secured:

1. It is favorable to contact Deanna either about the decline of one's life or even during the dying process. Not only does she lend support to you, but plans can begin for funerary rites immediately after death (five days afterward) or in the near future,
2. The individual may choose to have a friend or family member initiate the funerary rites request "at the appropriate time"; or,
3. A family member or close friend may make the funerary rites request on behalf of the deceased even if the deceased had not been cognizant of the rites being available to them.

An important aspect to the funerary rites is to have concerned family and friends *actively* participate in creating a welcoming atmosphere for the soul the first night. Family and friends who want to attend but are unable are able to join by zoom and that is set that up for you. Although, funerary rites have been successful with just one family member or close friend there to share the deceased's life stories.

From the outset, all involved must recognize that no matter how meticulously the protocols of the rites have been followed, a "successful" outcome cannot be guaranteed. If it is not meant for the soul to re-engage with the energies of the human realm, the soul will not present itself to take advantage of the guide's service. Recognizing we humans are not in control of this or any endeavor accounts for much in our mental/emotional health moving through and forward from these rites.

Shamanic work is highly specialized work. Deanna Jenné has been recognized and ritually initiated to perform these and other specialty funerary rites. For more, please contact Deanna Jenné by telephone 970-210-9520, by email at [djbutterfly5@gmail.com](mailto:djbutterfly5@gmail.com) or by going to the "Contact Us" page on the website: [www.deanna-jenne.com](http://www.deanna-jenne.com).

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Notes:

1 The Huichol are an indigenous people of West-Central Sierra Madre mountains of Mexico. Their culture feathered an unshakable reliance on its life-sustaining connection with Nature and with the unseen forces that govern humankind's three-dimensional reality. Huichol existence is sustained through ritual (including funerary rites), ceremony, celebration and a lifestyle of gratitude that is intimately connected with the lands they inhabit and upon which they rely for their sustenance and wellbeing.

2 Mara'akame (sing.): Mara'akate (pl.); Huichol for shaman, medicine wo/man, healer, community and ritual leader

3 Arrival at the Portal of the Ancestors represents the conclusion of the tonalli's individuality. The Mara'akame may not venture beyond this point. But before passing through this portal much of the transmigration with the Mara'akame will have been accomplished: (1) the soul's treacherous journey will have been abbreviated and made more bearable; (2) the destiny of the soul will have become clarified; and, (3) the soul, now rendered free of distractions in this world, will have become purified and life's toils and troubles reconciled and available to merge into the embrace of its seed culture, or "original people".

4 Indigenous cultures hold that this earthly realm was seeded with human forms into different environments (tropical, frigid, arid, etc.). Those environments contained all that each seed culture needed to survive and thrive in harmony with the nature beings of plants, animals, et.al. Along with the entities and gods who were likewise dreamed into that unique homeland. The Origination Story of an indigenous culture's heritage — passed down through the oral tradition over the millennia—holds sacred this connection of each human tonalli/soul with its ancestral roots. We each have a direct link to one of earth's seed cultures, and an aspect of the challenges we face in living today, it is said, is a result of this disconnection from our original people.

5 A "mutt" could be said to be a person who has a variety of incongruous ancestral soul connections. At some time in the past, for example, the deceased may not have received authentic funerary rites, may have encountered a tragic death, or may have passed while away from the soul's homeland. (Think of those who were released into the void from World War I and II alone!). Lacking funerary rites after countless rebirths, the tonalli could easily drift away from its origins and eventually part(s) of it would merge with parts of yet another lost soul's makeup. "Many people of our culture are being called to traditions outside their own. They feel a primordial longing for connection to their root people and I believe this is one reason why." Eliot Cowan.

6 If it is not possible to conduct these rites at the home of the deceased, these rites must take place at a location he or she frequented and enjoyed. The location and prescribed activities build a very specific energy that helps to draw the soul back toward earth's physical vibration to aid in connecting with the Mara'akame. It is customary for everyone to remain overnight at this ritual location, but not mandatory.

7 The applicant would do well to let a family member or trusted friend know her/his intentions in advance so that funerary rites' arrangements may be made expeditiously. The ritual windows (five days and forty days following the passing) are far from arbitrary and therefore present a fundamental timetable for a successful outcome. An Initiated Funerary Rites Mara'akame must be located and be available. Travel arrangements, expenses, coordinating the involvement of participants and other logistical matters must be factored into meeting the rite's timetable as well. Note: A related document, "Instructions upon Death for Funerary Rites", can be filled in and given to closest relatives or friends and the Mara'akame, and kept readily available with the applicant's other important papers, not to solely be in the will of the deceased. This document attests to the intention of the individual to have these funerary rites performed.

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