

TAMIL HUMANISM

A MEANINGFUL LIFE IN THIS WORLD



Tamil Humanist Ceremonies

SEENIVASA - MOODALI VERSION
Seenivasa (1861) & R.M. Moodali (1907)

THIRU MOODALI

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Thiru Moodali

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DEDICATED

To Tamil Humanists

The Tamil Humanist symbol

A is the first letter and with other letters forms the Tamil alphabet. It is also the first letter of the word 'Anbe'. 'Anbe' means love. So the letter A is a symbol of love.

The circle around the letter A symbolizes the earth. This emphasizes the universality of love and the philosophy of Tamil Humanism.

The shape of the heart around the earth is a symbol of love and healthy living.

Red, Black and yellow are traditional Tamil colours. Blue is the colour of the earth from space.

This Tamil Humanist symbol defines Tamil Humanism's unique identity and its philosophy's continued existence since the inception of the Indus Valley civilization to the present times. It is the symbol of humanism, human unity and cooperation.



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Chapter 1: Tamil Ceremonies and Congregations

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1. INTRODUCTION

The ceremonies of the Tamil Religion were called Tamil Agamas in ancient times. Saints often promoted the ceremonies as the path for Tamils. The Tamil Agamas emanate from the virtues of the Tamil Marai (Thirukural) itself. The Tamil Agamas is over 2000 years old. These ceremonies are Thiruvalluvar's 108 gifts to Tamils.

The Tamil Language, Tamil Culture and the Tamil Religion have a recorded history that is over 10 000 years old.

These traditional religious ceremonies were practised by the Tamil people of the Indus Valley civilization 3500 BC and the four Tamil kingdoms, namely Chola, Chera, Pandya and Eelam 300 BC. Archaeological evidence shows that the Tamil Marai principles manifested itself in the advanced social, cultural, economic and governance of the Indus Valley civilization.

The 108 ceremonies are gifts to each child born and to each Tamil. These gifts never perish. The gifts from Thiruvalluvar take the form of ceremonies. The ceremonies create a personal relationship with the verses and progress and achievement depends entirely on the individual. No other human being has control over the individual's progress or judgement of the progress and its results. The verses of the Tamil Marai will be the basis of the personal expression of one's life. This is Tamil culture in its original form. This is what makes one a follower of Tamil Humanism. The ceremonies are symbolically the Dance of Siva.

The Tamil Religion's belief and concept of God is explained in Chapter 1: "The Praise of God".

The Tamil Culture is the Eight Divine Virtues. The arts, knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviour that characterises Tamil Culture is promoted from Chapter 2 to Chapter 133.

This book will explain the ceremonial or worship procedures and songs in the practice of Tamil Humanism

Thiruvalluvar defines the image of God in the first verse in Chapter One of the Tamil Marai. He says the following:

'A' leads letters; the eternal God 1

Leads and lords the entire world.

This image of the letter A is prescribed for use in ceremonies.

Saint Thirunavukarasu prescribes the method to worship God in Thirumurai 6 of the Thevaram of the sixth verse of Thiruvadhigai veerattanam: **salam puvodu**. He says the following:

salam puvodu

I have never forgotten to worship you with water, flowers and incense

I have never failed to recite to you in Tamil poems

I never did forget you while I was well placed in life or while suffering

My tongue never failed to chant your sacred name NAMASIVAYA

Water, flowers and incense is prescribed to be used in ceremonies. Reciting Tamil poems and chanting Namasivaya is also prescribed for a servant of God.

2. CEREMONIAL PROCEDURES

The ceremonial procedure is as follows:

- a) The type of ceremony is stated.
- b) The verses of the chapters of the Tamil Marai that fall under that ceremony are recited.
- c) A topic related to the chapter and verses is stated.
- d) A lecture based on a topic is researched and discussed.
- e) The member's Personal Development Plan on how to make that Virtue a part of his or her life is presented. The person becomes an active participant in fulfilling the Tamil Marai objectives so that the Tamil Culture remains relevant and valuable to their personal lives. In this way the Tamil Culture becomes a living culture and a way of life.
- f) The members of the Tamil Sangam offer their support to the participant.

3. TYPES OF CEREMONIES

The following Tamil Humanist ceremonies emanate from the Tamil Marai:

3.1. THE PRAISE OF GOD

The Tamil Religion is explained in Chapter 1 of the Tamil Marai: “The Praise of God”

1. Recite the Tamil Marai ceremony

Chapter 1

2. Recite the Name of God ceremony

Chapter 1

3. Declaration of faith ceremony

Chapter 1

3.2. THE EIGHT DIVINE VIRTUES

The Tamil Culture is expressed from Chapter 2 to 133 of the Tamil Marai which describes the Eight Divine Virtues.

4. Love ceremony

Chapter 2

5. Peace ceremony

Chapter 3,4

6. Truth ceremony

Chapter 5,7,29

7. Right conduct ceremony

Chapter 8

8. Self discipline ceremony

Chapter 9,74

9. Living in balance and moderation ceremony

Chapter 10

10. Making your future ceremony

Chapter 11

11. Good deeds ceremony

Chapter 12

12. Fraud and corruption free ceremony

Chapter 13

13. Be yourself ceremony

Chapter 14

14. Virtues ceremony

Chapter 15

15. Anger free ceremony

Chapter 16

16. Hate free ceremony

Chapter 17,117,118

17. Virtuous women association ceremony

Chapter 18,

18. Intoxicants free ceremony

Chapter 20

19. Gambling free ceremony

Chapter 21

20. Wealth creation ceremony

Chapter 22,129

21. Humanist and rationalist ceremony

Chapter 23

22. Non-violence ceremony

Chapter 24

23. Respecting life ceremony

Chapter 19,25

24. Human values ceremony

Chapter 26

25. Compassion ceremony

Chapter 27

26. Repentance ceremony

Chapter 28

27. Letting go ceremony

Chapter 30

28. Honour and self respect ceremony

Chapter 31

29. Vision and ambition ceremony

Chapter 32

30. Courtesy ceremony

Chapter 33

31. Modesty ceremony

Chapter 34

32. Leadership ceremony

Chapter 35

33. Read and learn ceremony

Chapter 36

34. Listening ceremony

Chapter 37

35. Wisdom ceremony

Chapter 38,115

36. Think and plan ceremony

Chapter 41

37. Strength and weakness ceremony

Chapter 42

38. Timeliness ceremony

Chapter 43

39. Right place ceremony

Chapter 44

40. Trusting people ceremony

Chapter 45

41. Employing people ceremony

Chapter 46

42. Remembrance ceremony (Heros Day)

Chapter 47

43. Kind and cheerful look ceremony

Chapter 48

44. Research ceremony

Chapter 49

45. Industriousness ceremony

Chapter 50

46. Diligence ceremony

Chapter 51

47. Perseverance ceremony

Chapter 52

48. Executive and service delivery ceremony

Chapter 53

49. Eloquently speaking ceremony

Chapter 54,61,62,71,80

50. Purity of action ceremony

Chapter 55

51. Resolute action ceremony

Chapter 56

52. Following procedures ceremony

Chapter 57

53. Good ambassadors ceremony

Chapter 58

54. Leader association ceremony

Chapter 59

55. Determine self interest ceremony

Chapter 60

56. Judiciary and administration of justice ceremony

Chapter 63

57. Legislature and democracy ceremony

Chapter 64

58. Six functions ceremony

Chapter 65

59. Family ceremony

Chapter 66

60. Good husband ceremony

Chapter 67,84,85,86,87,88,89,90

61. Good wife ceremony

Chapter 68,91,92,93,94,95,96,97,98,99,100,101,102,103,104,105,106,107,108

62. Good child ceremony

Chapter 69

63. Hospitality ceremony

Chapter 70

64. Gratitude ceremony

Chapter 72

65. Equity ceremony

Chapter 73

66. Appropriate social behaviour ceremony

Chapter 75

67. Single partner relationships ceremony

Chapter 83

68. Forgiveness ceremony

Chapter 76

69. Kindness ceremony

Chapter 77

70. Satisfaction ceremony

Chapter 78

71. Complimenting people ceremony

Chapter 79

72. Charity ceremony

Chapter 81,130

73. Achievements ceremony

Chapter 82

74. Community ceremony

Chapter 109

75. Friendship ceremony

Chapter 39,40,110,111,112,113,114

76. Struggle against vice and sin ceremony

Chapter 116,

77. Respect ceremony

Chapter 119,

78. Virtuous women leadership ceremony

Chapter 120

79. Civil society participation ceremony

Chapter 121

80. Activism ceremony

Chapter 122

81. Public service ceremony

Chapter 123

82. Protection ceremony

Chapter 124

83. Housing ceremony

Chapter 125

84. Education ceremony

Chapter 6,126

85. Health ceremony

Chapter 127

86. Economic participation ceremony

Chapter 128,131

87. Farming ceremony

Chapter 132

88. Nature rights ceremony

Chapter 133

89. Human rights ceremony

Chapter 64

90. Recreation ceremony

Chapter 8

91. Cooking ceremony

Chapter 8

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Chapter 8

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Chapter 8

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Chapter 8

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Chapter 8

96. Exercise and physical fitness ceremony

Chapter 8

97. Tamil self-determination ceremony

Chapter 128

98. Tamil Marai ceremony

Chapter 47

99. Thanksgiving ceremony

Chapter 72

100. Wedding anniversary ceremony

Chapter 2,47,66

101. Retirement ceremony

Chapter 8

102. Pongol ceremony

Chapter 47

103. Thiruvalluvar's birthday ceremony

Chapter 2,47

104. Name giving ceremony

Chapter 2,8,66

105. Birthday ceremony

Chapter 2,8,47

106. Marriage ceremony

Chapter 2,66

107. Funeral ceremony

Chapter 5,7,8

108. Memorial service ceremony

Chapter 31,47

4. TAMIL SANGAMS

The Sangams are institutions that practice Tamil Humanism since 70 000 years ago. The 108 ceremonies of the Tamil Marai are practiced through the Sangams.

The formula for a small Tamil Sangam is that it is composed of 3 sets of 2 people. The 2 persons are 1 male and 1 female. A husband and wife are also 2 people and 3 couples is a small Sangam. This gives a total of 6 members for a small Tamil Sangam.

The age admission to a small Sangam is 16 years.

The purpose of the Sangam is the following:

Recite the Tamil Marai

Do meditation

Perform the 108 ceremonies.

Discuss literature

Discuss one's Personal Development Plan on how to achieve The Eight Divine Virtues objectives.

Provide a social support group for its members.

Each person will speak after researching. All lectures and discussions are done at the small Sangam. Lectures must be motivational, inspirational, uplifting and free of negativity and destructive criticism. Each Sangam group will receive the lectures from the Research Committee.

The small Sangam meeting will be held once a week. The idea is not to have long meetings but short, quality and impact meetings.

It will be for a maximum time of 45 min.

10 min – clear mind meditation

10 min – all 6 persons to recite a chapter of the Tamil Marai

16 min lecture on the chapter

8 min discussion

1 min reciting the holy names

The Tamil Sangam is a community. Together they make the Tamil Marai a living tradition of the Tamils.

The Tamil Women's Sangam and the Tamil Youth Sangam are important in strengthening the Tamil Marai principles in the community.

5. COUNCIL OF SANGAM LEADERS

A council in each country will regulate the many Sangams.

The Tamil Sangam will have a Literature Research Committee. The committee will produce literature for all the groups. The groups will use the literature for the progress and benefit of its members. The literature is per year and is current and relevant to the times. The research committee is made up of professionals and scholars from universities. Other committees will be for arts, music, exercise, recreation, health, education, language, etc. The purpose of this committee is to pass knowledge from one generation to the next. This knowledge will also improve the quality of life of its members. The 108 ceremonies will each have a committee generating current and relevant information.

All the national Sangam leaders will form the world council of Tamil Sangams. An appropriate name for this Human Social Movement is the Tamil Humanist International Sangam (THIS).

The Tamil Humanist International Sangam (This) shall promote the Tamil Marai and books on Virtues.

6. SANGUM CONGREGATION

Tamils gather into a congregation because of the innate needs of an individual to have a sense of belongingness and appreciation of their value and contribution to the community. This is a feeling that one makes a difference in this world through their uniqueness.

Tamil religion does not have a priestly class of individuals to conduct worship of God. Brahmins or priests who mediate between a congregation and God is regarded as a sin.

Therefore the need for congregational worship through Sangams becomes essential.

The Sangams provide a platform to remember core values and the Tamil culture and religion. The principles of virtues are remembered and the poems for ceremonies are recited and remembered. The Sunday programs help remembrance and keep the individual focussed on Tamil Virtues throughout the week. On festivals and ceremonies all Tamils know the songs and poems and are able to perform the ceremonies. It keeps Tamil Humanism alive.

Every Tamil who practices Tamil Humanism understands all the worship procedures in the Sangam and poems.

The Tamil Sangum is a large congregation of Tamils who praise God in a uniform procedure and with standard poems or songs. Every Tamil takes part in the Tamil Sangum as an equal and all praise and worship God directly.

This book presents the Sangam worship procedures and gives a step by step breakdown of the procedure.

6.1. ANDHANAR

Andhanar is a Tamil word for Celebrant. Andhanars conduct the Tamil humanist ceremonies in the Sangam.

6.2. BLESSING THE FOOD

The blessing of the food or giving thanks for the food prepared is done as prescribed by Saint Thinan (Kanappa).

7. THE SANGAM BUILDING

The Tamil Sangam congregates in a building that is built according to Sangam architecture. This building is also called the Sangam. The place of worship for Tamils is called the Sangam. Just as Christians worship in a Church, Jews in a Synagogue, Muslims in a Mosque and Hindus and Buddhists in a Temple, the Tamil place of worship is in a Sangam. The altar is called the Ragasiyam.

7.1. THE RAGASIYAM

In the building of the Tamil Sangam, people sit in rows facing the altar or (sanctum sanctorum).

The people sit on chairs or wooden benches, facing the altar. A podium raised is on the right hand side. This is where speeches and lectures are made.

The altar is built like a room and it is empty. This emptiness symbolises God which nothing material can represent. The point of focus is an empty space.

The back wall which faces the congregation has the letter A which Tamils meditate on. On the left wall the ten verses of 'Praise of God' from the Thirukural is written. On the right wall is written the Holy Names. The floors, roof and walls are tiled and has mosaic designs with Tamil alphabets. On the roof hangs golden leaves with the Tamil alphabets on it. In ancient times the walls of the Sangams had writings on it.

In another building is the Hall of Saints where all the statues of saints both male and female and symbols are kept. This is a museum of saints who contributed to Tamil.

The building is constructed according to the style of the Chidambaram. The outer wall fence and the Gate are also built like Chidambaram in Thillai. The statues of the wall and gate will be that of Tamil saints.

7.2. THE CEREMONIAL TABLE

The ceremonial table is set up as prescribed by Thiruvalluvar, Saint Thirunavukarasu (Appar) and Saint Thinan (Kanappa).

On the ceremonial table is the image or picture of the letter A. On the table on either side is the Kuthu lamps and God lamp in the centre. A symbolic gold brick with Thiruvalluvar's name on it

is placed on the side. Water, a flower and 1 incense stick is placed on the table. Two lit candles stand at the ends of the table. The table is covered with a table cloth.

The congregation faces the ceremonial table and recite Tamil poems and chant Namasivaya.

8. DECLARATION OF FAITH CERTIFICATE

Certificate of Confirmation

“Like senses stale that head is vain
Which bows not to Eight Virtues Divine.”

Tamil Marai, chapter 1, verse 9

This certifies that _____ publicly confessed faith in Tamil Humanism on
_____date_____, through the Tamil Humanist International Sangam (THIS).

THIS (____date____)

I _____ declare:

God is Spirit and God's attributes is Divine Virtues.

I am a child of God.

Thiruvalluvar is the Messenger of God.

I have faith in the Holy Tamil Marai

I will express the Eight Divine Virtues culture to the best I can in my personal life.

I am Tamil.

Signature

The Declaration of Faith reinforces a commitment to the core beliefs of Tamils which are:

1. Tamil Marai is the Sacred Word of God.
2. Thiruvalluvar is the Messenger of God.
3. There is only one God.

The Tamil words for God are Kadavul, Pagavan, Iraivan, Pathi and Namasivaya

4. Praise the one God who is inconceivable to the human mind and body.
5. Praise the Eight Divine Virtues aspect of the one God.

The Eight Divine Virtues is the culture of love, peace, truth, right conduct, non-violence, human values, human rights and nature rights.

6. Declare your faith in the Eight Divine Virtues.
7. Express the Eight Divine Virtues culture to the best you can in your daily life as an offering to God.
8. Read, learn and teach the next generation the Tamil Religion (Tamil Humanism), the Tamil Culture and the Tamil Language.

9. CONCLUSION

The Tamil Humanist ceremonies are universal to all people. It uplifts and liberates people and provides a way of life.

The Tamil Marai promotes the Tamil language, the Tamil Religion and the Tamil Culture. The Tamil Marai is written in the Tamil Language. Reciting the Tamil Marai promotes the Tamil language.

In this book, from Chapter 2 to Chapter 6 are examples of Tamil Humanist Ceremonies that you could use.

Chapter 2: Child Naming Ceremony and Welcome to Life Celebrations

Contents

1. Introduction
2. The child with parents enters
3. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 1: A is a symbol of God
4. Introduce the child and family and honour them
5. Lighting of the kuthu lamps by the parent – the father
6. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 2: Space is a symbol of God.
7. Lighting of the God lamp by the parent – the mother
8. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 3: Light is a symbol of God
9. The meaning of a child naming ceremony
10. Presentation of duties, responsibilities and roles of mentors, grandparents, siblings, parents and the child.
11. Questions to the gathering
12. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 4: The attributes of God are the culture of Eight Divine Virtues
13. Mentors
14. Questions to the mentors
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18. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 6: Namasivaya is a Tamil Name of God
19. Siblings

20. Questions to the siblings
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22. Questions to the parents
23. Father's speech - promises/pledges; Mother's speech - promises/pledges
24. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 10: Baby naming
25. The formal naming
26. Giving a flower
27. The name
28. Meaning of the name
29. Giving of a token
30. Giving of gifts by mother, father and siblings to the child
31. Signing of the naming certificate
32. Lighting of the God lamp by both parents
33. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 8: Thanksgiving
34. Blessings for the child's future
35. Congratulations and introducing the child to the gathering
36. Speech by the child's siblings
37. Speech by the child if older than 6 years.
38. Naming day cake: Cutting of cake
39. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 9: Benediction and the praise of Tamil
40. Vote of thanks
41. Blessing of the meals
42. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 14: Prayer before eating
43. Naming reception: Announce supper (buffet or table serving)
44. A book of good wishes

45. Announces family and friends to take photos

46. Conclusion

DIALOGUE

1. INTRODUCTION

Recite Ulagelaam

Dear families and friends.

I'd like to welcome you to the naming ceremony for the child of Father_____ and Mother _____.

My name is _____and I am a Tamil celebrant.

2. THE CHILD WITH PARENTS ENTERS

On behalf of child's parents, I thank you all for attending. Your presence is a gift of support and caring, and they appreciate your sharing this special ceremony and celebration with them.

Throughout the world and throughout the history of humankind, formal ceremony has been used to mark the rites of passage which all human beings experience in common.

This is a meaningful way to celebrate the baby's life and for his/her family and friends to communally express their love for him/her and commitment to his/her upbringing.

Each of you is here today because you are part of Father _____and Mother_____ circle of friends and family and as such they will look to you to give them and their son/daughter the support and security that only such a fellowship can give.

Each of us has played a role in the lives of Father _____and Mother _____and now it is more about making a commitment to the future of this child.

In the years to follow each of us may have the opportunity to contribute to the development of this child through the friendships we already have and the knowledge and experience we have gained in our lives and can pass on to this young life. Although these opportunities and possibilities lie in the future we can gain an insight into the challenges and pleasures of raising children through the experiences of our community.

Tamil Humanism is a religion of love and peace. It affirms that as humans by our very nature have the capacity and the responsibility to lead meaningful and virtuous lives. It is a commitment to reason, compassion and social responsibility. It is in this spirit that we gather here today.

In welcoming and naming a child, we celebrate the birth of a human being.

We rejoice that the baby has been born into the concern and care of father_____ and mother_____. The task of nurturing the child belongs mainly to them.

We rejoice that the baby is growing up in this community. It takes a community to raise a child. Nurturing also belongs to all of you, family, friends and colleagues. Every member of a community has a responsibility and duty to care for the other members of the community.

You are the larger community in which the baby will grow up. It is through you that he/she will come to know his/her community and his/her world. By your support, example and encouragement you have a part to play in the development of this child to his/her fullest potential.

Throughout the world and throughout the history of humankind, formal ceremony has been used to mark the rites of passage which all human beings experience in common.

This is a meaningful way to celebrate the baby's life and for his/her family and friends to communally express their love for him/her and commitment to his/her upbringing.

Each of you is here today because you are part of Father _____ and Mother_____ circle of friends and family and as such they will look to you to give them and their son/daughter the support and security that only such a fellowship can give.

Each of us has played a role in the lives of Father _____ and Mother _____ and now it is more about making a commitment to the future of this child.

In the years to follow each of us may have the opportunity to contribute to the development of this child through the friendships we already have and the knowledge and experience we have gained in our lives and can pass on to this young life. Although these opportunities and possibilities lie in the future we can gain an insight into the challenges and pleasures of raising children through the experiences of our community.

Today Father_____ and Mother_____ want to share in the celebration of their baby's birth.

They wish to introduce their child to this gathering who will guide him/her along the way.

3. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 1: A is a symbol of God

4. INTRODUCE THE CHILD AND FAMILY AND HONOUR THEM

We are pleased to honour father_____ and mother_____, and the lovely baby/child _____.

5. LIGHTING OF THE KUTHU LAMPS BY THE PARENT – THE FATHER

May father _____ please light the kuthu lamp.

6. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 2: Space is a symbol of God.

7. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE PARENT – THE MOTHER

May mother _____ please light the God lamp.

8. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 3: Light is a symbol of God

9. THE MEANING OF A CHILD NAMING CEREMONY

The Tamil celebrant gives the meaning of the child naming ceremony.

10. PRESENTATION OF DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES OF MENTORS, GRANDPARENTS, SIBLINGS, PARENTS AND THE CHILD.

The Tamil celebrant explains the duties, responsibilities and roles of all concerned.

11. QUESTIONS TO THE GATHERING

Will you all give him/her a heart-warming welcome and will you accept the privilege and the responsibility of guiding the child and also nurturing the freedom and spirit of this child?

Answer: Yes we do.

12. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 4: The attributes of God are the culture of Eight Divine Virtues

13. MENTORS

Father_____ and Mother_____ have chosen six very special individuals whom they hope will help shape the baby's life.

Children need role models in addition to their parents. Their hope is that their son/daughter will be able to turn to his/her mentors, (indicate their names).

A mentor is a wise and trusted guide, an advisor who has nurtured a special relationship with a dependent child that allows for the free exchange of ideas and advice. A mentoring relationship is meaningful and deeply rewarding to both child and mentor.

14. QUESTIONS TO THE MENTORS

Names_____, will you look upon this child, your protege with affection and will you give to him your guidance, friendship and inspiration?

Answer: Yes we do.

15. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 5: The concept of God

16. GRANDPARENTS

Being a grandparent is a joyful, tender and solemn duty.

17. QUESTIONS TO THE GRANDPARENTS

Will you share your wisdom and will you respect, befriend and love your grandchild?

Answer: Yes we do.

18. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 6: Namasivaya is a Tamil Name of God

19. SIBLINGS

Being a sibling is to have a friend for life.

20. QUESTIONS TO THE SIBLINGS

Do you promise to accept a special commitment to baby _____ to offer friendship and sanctuary so that he can turn to you in times of doubt or difficulty, with confidence and trust?

Answer: Yes we do.

21. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 7: The rejection of fear and superstition

22. QUESTIONS TO THE PARENTS

In bringing your child to be named to this service of dedication you are sharing with your families and friends some of the joy that is yours as parents.

Will you endeavour, to the best of your ability, to provide for him/her a home of love and security and to be to him/her an example, which he/she may safely follow?

Answer: Yes we do.

You declare your wish and purpose to raise him according to your best efforts and according to the values and virtues of the Tamil Marai. These values are broader and deeper since they are moral and ethical standards toward which you have always strived.

To this end, will you teach your child, by example, to walk in the ways of truth, love, peace and compassion and further to uphold the principles of Human values, Human Rights and Nature Rights?

Answer: Yes we do.

Father_____ and Mother_____, What Hopes and Dreams do you have for your son/daughter?

Reply (to be read and/or written by the parents):

1. We want him/her to grow up knowing good from bad.
2. We want him/her to be able to use their own good judgment when making decisions.
6. We want him/her to know his/her identity as Tamil.
7. We want him/her to follow Tamil Humanism and understand the Tamil Marai is the Word of God and Thiruvalluvar is a Messenger of God for the Tamils.
3. We want him/her to never fear to ask questions.
4. We want him/her to always question, and never have "blind faith" in anything.
5. We want him/her to know he can be whatever he/she wishes to be, and that we, his/her Mother and Father (Mum and Dad) will always support him/her.

23. FATHER'S SPEECH - PROMISES/PLEDGES; MOTHER'S SPEECH - PROMISES/PLEDGES

This is the part of the ceremony where you promise, in words of your choosing to be as good a parent as you can be.

Father_____ and Mother_____, What Pledges do you make to your son/daughter?

Reply (to be read and/or written by the parents):

To this child, as to all children, we make these pledges:

We will recognize your worth as a person, and help you to strengthen your sense of belonging to the human family.

We will give you our love so that you may grow with trust in yourself and in other people.

We will respect your right to be yourself and, at the same time, help you to understand the rights of others.

We will encourage you always to search for the truth.

We will give you the opportunity to develop your own understanding of life and a respect for all living beings.

24. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 10: Baby naming

Tamil Humanist Readings: 10.1. Tamil Marai: Chapter 69: The Blessing of Children

25. THE FORMAL NAMING

We give the child a name in this ceremony and by doing so we declare that the child is an individual, a unique and a separate person with a dignity and a life of his/her own. A name once given will be associated forever with a face, a voice, a walk, a laugh and all the other idiosyncrasies our families and friends recognize that reflect this child's individuality. This child's name will be spoken, whispered, shouted, cried, sung and written – thousands of times, impersonally and meaningfully – by family, friends, neighbours, school friends, teachers, doctors, colleagues, loves, strangers, and maybe by children and grandchildren. It will define his/her identity.

In giving this child his/her name we declare that we will respect him/her as himself/herself and give him/her the freedom to be himself/herself.

In naming and welcoming this child through a public ceremony, we declare that all of us are responsible for the care and development of all children. It is our task to give them our ideals and our hopes. It is our task to give them a world of peace and justice in which to grow.

26. GIVING A FLOWER

In this ceremony, we give the child a flower because it reminds us of the beauty and freshness of life, and the meaning of this dedication. Whether a flower grows into full bloom or not, whether it grows tall and strong, whether its purpose is fulfilled, depends on the nurture it receives. No flower grows alone, apart from sunshine and the rain, apart from the soil from which it grows. So, too, no child grows up alone, and all of you are here for this child, in all the seasons and the times of his/her days. We dedicate ourselves to the task of nourishing the beauty and freshness of this child and of all children.

Father_____ and Mother_____ you may give your child a flower.

Response: (The parents give a flower to the child)

27. THE NAME

Father_____ and Mother_____ what is the name you give to the child.

Answer:_____

28. MEANING OF THE NAME

The name your parents have chosen for you is _____.

The meaning of the name is:

So _____(Name Surname), we welcome you with our love into the fellowship of this community.

May your unfolding life before you be a life of beauty, love and peace.

May your name represent your life and identity.

29. GIVING OF A TOKEN

Father_____ and mother _____ you may give a token to the child.

Response: (Parents will give child a silver 'heart' necklace as a symbol of their enduring and unconditional love for him/her with the child's name engraved on it. This is optional.)

30. GIVING OF GIFTS BY MOTHER, FATHER AND SIBLINGS TO THE CHILD

Mother _____, father _____, and siblings _____ you may give your gifts to the child _____.

31. SIGNING OF THE NAMING CERTIFICATE

Father _____ and mother _____ as well as the mentors, please sign the naming certificate.

32. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY BOTH PARENTS

May father _____ and mother _____ please light the God lamp.

33. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 8: Thanksgiving

34. BLESSINGS FOR THE CHILD'S FUTURE

The Tamil celebrant gives his/her blessings for the good future for the child.

35. CONGRATULATIONS AND INTRODUCING THE CHILD TO THE GATHERING

I want to congratulate all present for being a part of child _____ life.

To our gathering, please welcome child _____.

36. SPEECH BY THE CHILD'S SIBLINGS

May the sibling _____ please come forward and give your speech.

37. SPEECH BY THE CHILD IF OLDER THAN 6 YEARS.

Our dearest child _____ you may now give your speech.

38. NAMING DAY CAKE: CUTTING OF CAKE

Father _____ and mother _____ you make cut the cake.

39. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 9: Benediction and the praise of Tamil

40. VOTE OF THANKS

May _____ please give the vote of thanks.

41. BLESSING OF THE MEALS

We are now going to bless the food.

42. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 14: Prayer before eating

43. NAMING RECEPTION: ANNOUNCE SUPPER (BUFFET OR TABLE SERVING)

A meal is provided so we may all share in this joyous ceremony.

The food is going to be served as a buffet/ table serving.

44. A BOOK OF GOOD WISHES

Families and friends, we hope that all of you will please record your thoughts and your messages for the child in the Wish Book. Over the years, they will share your good wishes with the baby and he/she will know that he/she is a part of the fabric of this family and community.

45. ANNOUNCES FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO TAKE PHOTOS

All families and friends may now have their photos taken with the child.

46. CONCLUSION

We give thanks for the gift of children whose innocence and laughter keep the world young.

May this new life which we have accepted into our midst receive the gifts of health, love and wisdom and in turn give back to the common Tamil heritage which has nurtured him/her.

ARRANGEMENTS

A Baby Naming ceremony can be organised by any family member or a Tamil celebrant.

A Tamil celebrant will help people plan and compose their ceremony and conduct it on the chosen day.

A Baby Naming ceremony is an ideal way to celebrate the birth of your child and welcome your child into the family and circle of friends and announce the names you have chosen.

A Tamil naming ceremony is also a Welcome to the World ceremony.

Parents state their love and commitment to their child and declare hopes for their future. They make a formal expression of the family's hopes and aspirations for the child.

Naming Ceremonies may also appoint adult mentors for the child.

A mentor takes special interest in the welfare and happiness of the child.

Mentors are also a guide parent and supporting adult.

During the ceremony other children in the family also promise to love and care for their new sibling.

A welcome to life ceremony is symbolic of friends and family making a spiritual and emotional commitment to the child and his or her upbringing.

This beautiful occasion also gives parents the chance to make promises and commitments to the baby and for friends and relatives to confirm their special relationship with the child and to offer their love and support for the baby's future.

It brings a sense of family and unity among friends and is a confirmation that the child is welcomed and is under the protection of them.

This ceremony is also for adoptive families or for those who have become guardians. Holding a ceremony in honour of an adopted child or step children is a great way to make an older child feel a part of the family.

Welcoming ceremonies are a beautiful way to celebrate the adoption of a child or to embrace stepchildren into a newly-formed family.

The new parents will make a vow to love, protect and honour the child and raise him or her to the best of their abilities.

If the adopted child is a baby, a simple baby naming ceremony may be appropriate, but if the child is older a welcome ceremony is needed. The ceremony can include meaningful input from the child, and the taking of the family name, rather than the giving of a personal name, is recognized as the start of a new family relationship by all involved. Welcoming ceremonies can embrace a child who is old enough to be an active participant. The focus of the ceremony is usually a special welcome of the child into the family and an expression of love and commitment by the new family.

For a baby the name identifies the child as a unique individual. The meaning of the name is explained.

You are not only introducing them by name, you may also want to make your commitment to their welfare and to them as significant people in your lives.

i. BEFORE THE NAMING CEREMONY

Select a family member, friend, relative or a Tamil celebrant to conduct the ceremony.

The venue must be decided.

A service format should be chosen. The Tamil celebrant may use the standard format or this can be written by the parents.

Invitations should be sent to family and friends before the ceremony.

ii. VENUE FOR BABY NAMING CEREMONY

The Naming Ceremony can be held in the Sungum and its sacred space is the Ragasiyam.

It can also be held at a special location chosen by the parents. This can be their home or garden or in the home of a family member.

The venue can be decorated with flowers and candles. Provision can be made to light a ceremonial candle, to light a God lamp and Kuthu lamps and to release helium balloons.

All should be ready 45 minutes before the ceremony starts.

iii. INTRODUCTION

The Tamil celebrant welcomes the gathering and explains the purpose of the Ceremony

The Naming Ceremony is an opportunity to declare before family and friends, your promises to be as good a parent as you can, and for adult friends or relatives to confirm their special relationship with your child.

The ceremony will last 1 hour.

iv. LIGHTING OF THE KUTHU LAMPS BY THE PARENT

Two kuthu lamps and 1 God lamp are placed on the table and a lit candle.

The father or parent will light the kuthu lamp.

v. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE PARENT

The mother will light the God lamp.

vi. QUESTIONS TO THE GATHERING

The questions are put to the gathering charging them with their responsibilities in welcoming the newest member of the community.

vii. QUESTIONS TO THE MENTORS

During the ceremony they will make declarations of love and support to your child.

The questions are put to the mentors charging them with their responsibilities in welcoming the newest member of the community.

viii. QUESTIONS TO THE GRANDPARENTS

The questions are put to the grandparents charging them with their responsibilities in welcoming the newest member of the community.

ix. QUESTIONS TO THE SIBLINGS

The questions are put to the sibling charging them with their responsibilities in welcoming the newest member of the community.

x. QUESTIONS TO THE PARENTS

The questions are put to the parents charging them with their responsibilities in welcoming the newest member of the community.

xi. PARENTS' PROMISES/PLEDGES

The Parents set out their pledges to the child.

xii. THE FORMAL NAMING

A ritual in honour of the naming of the child.

The celebrant asks you to confirm the full name you've given to your child and, if you wish, to tell the reasons for your choices.

xiii. GIVING A FLOWER

The parents give a flower or a flower of a potted plant to be planted in a garden.

xiv. THE NAME

A name is given by the parents.

xv. MEANING OF THE NAME

The meaning of the name is explained.

xvi. GIVING OF A TOKEN

Parents can ask guests who are children to create a drawing or piece of artwork. The children's artwork can decorate the stage. Later they can be framed and hung in the child's bedroom. This can be accompanied by words from artists and an exchange of tokens with them for very special memories of the occasion.

Gifts, souvenirs and tokens of the ceremony can be given to the child by the parents as well as others.

The guests may also receive a token of their commitment to the child.

This ceremony would be accompanied by suitable words that explain the meaning of the gifts.

Symbolic gifts can be presented as keepsakes

xvii. SIGNING OF THE NAMING CERTIFICATE

The parents, mentors and grandparents can sign a naming certificate to formalise the naming of the child.

The celebrant will bring the certificate.

The celebrant will present the parents the naming and welcome certificate.

xviii. NAMING DAY CAKE

The parents or a sibling will cut the naming and welcome cake.

xix. A BOOK OF GOOD WISHES

The celebrant will ask guests to write a message in a book.

A guest card can be put in the invitation. The guests will have time to write a message of meaning in their own time before arriving at the function.

A space is included on the card for guests to note their relationship to the child. The child will be able to use them to assist with the compilation of his family tree.

All the guest cards together with photos of the day can be put into a Commemorative Folder. Alternatively the guests can stick the cards into the Book of Good Wishes.

When the child is older, he/she will be able to read all the special messages written for him/her.

xx. CONCLUSION

The Tamil celebrant concludes the ceremony.

Guests are invited to congratulate the parents and mentors.

xxi. THE NAMING RECEPTION

A meal is part of the ceremony as guests share with the parents in the naming and welcoming of their child.

Chapter 3: Birthday Celebration

Contents

1. Introduction
2. The Birthday person enters
3. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 1: A is a symbol of God
4. Introduce birthday person and family and honour them
5. Lighting of the kuthu lamps by the parent – the father if the birthday person is under 23 years, or partner if over 23 years.
6. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 2: Space is a symbol of God.
7. Lighting of the God lamp by the parent – the mother if the birthday person is under 23 years, or partner and children if over 23 years.
8. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 3: Light is a symbol of God
9. The meaning of a birthday celebration.
10. Presentation of duties, responsibilities and roles applicable to the age of the birthday person
11. Speech by a close friend
12. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 4: The attributes of God are the culture of Eight Divine Virtues
13. Speech by a close relative
14. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 5: The concept of God
15. Speech by sibling
16. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 6: Namasivaya is a Tamil Name of God
17. Speech by parent
18. Speech by partner

19. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 7: The rejection of fear and superstition
20. Lighting of the candles by parents or siblings or partner
21. Blowing of the candles by birthday person
22. Birthday cake: Cutting of the cake by birthday person
23. Feeding of the cake
24. Sing happy birthday song
25. Giving of gifts by the mother, father and siblings if the birthday person is under 23 years, or partner and children if over 23 years.
26. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 11: Birthday
27. The slide show and video
28. Propose toast
29. Birthday person's speech
30. Birthday person gives gifts
31. Lighting of the God lamp by the birthday person
32. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 8: Thanksgiving
33. Blessings for the birthday person's future.
34. Congratulations
35. Vote of thanks
36. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 9: Benediction and the praise of Tamil
37. Blessing of the meals
38. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 14: Prayer before eating
39. Birthday reception: Announce supper (buffet or table serving)
40. Announces family and friends to take photos
41. Conclusion

DIALOGUE

1. INTRODUCTION

Recite Ulagelaam

Dear families and friends,

My name is _____ and I'm a Tamil celebrant for this occasion.

I'd like to welcome you to the birthday celebration of _____.

On behalf of _____, I thank you all for attending. Your presence is a gift of support and caring, and they appreciate your sharing this special ceremony and celebration with them.

2. THE BIRTHDAY PERSON ENTERS

Please welcome _____

3. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 1: A is a symbol of God

4. INTRODUCE BIRTHDAY PERSON AND FAMILY AND HONOUR THEM

On the main table, we have the birthday child, _____, his/her father _____, his/her mother _____, sister _____, brother _____, and partner _____.

5. LIGHTING OF THE KUTHU LAMPS BY THE PARENT – THE FATHER IF THE BIRTHDAY PERSON IS UNDER 23 YEARS, OR PARTNER IF OVER 23 YEARS.

Two kuthu lamps and 1 God lamp are placed on the table. The father or parent of the birthday person will light the kuthu lamp.

6. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 2: Space is a symbol of God.

7. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE PARENT – THE MOTHER IF THE BIRTHDAY PERSON IS UNDER 23 YEARS, OR PARTNER AND CHILDREN IF OVER 23 YEARS.

8. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 3: Light is a symbol of God

This poems is recited while lighting the God lamp.

9. THE MEANING OF A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

A speech is given on the meaning of a birthday celebration.

10. PRESENTATION OF DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES APPLICABLE TO THE AGE OF THE BIRTHDAY PERSON

A speech highlighting the duties, responsibilities and roles of the birthday person.

11. SPEECH BY A CLOSE FRIEND

I call upon _____ who is a close friend to the birthday child.

12. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 4: The attributes of God are the culture of Eight Divine Virtues

13. SPEECH BY A CLOSE RELATIVE

I call upon _____ who is a close relative to the birthday child.

14. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 5: The concept of God

15. SPEECH BY SIBLING

I call upon _____ who is a sibling to the birthday child.

16. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 6: Namasivaya is a Tamil Name of God

17. SPEECH BY PARENT

I call upon _____ who is the father/mother to the birthday child.

18. SPEECH BY PARTNER

I call upon _____ who is a life partner to the birthday child.

19. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 7: The rejection of fear and superstition

20. LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES BY PARENTS OR SIBLINGS OR PARTNER

I call upon the parents/siblings/partner to light the candles on the cake.

21. BLOWING OF THE CANDLES BY BIRTHDAY PERSON

You may blow the candles on the cake.

22. BIRTHDAY CAKE: CUTTING OF THE CAKE BY BIRTHDAY PERSON

Please cut the cake.

23. FEEDING OF THE CAKE

Parents/siblings/partner you may feed a small piece of cake to the birthday child.

24. SING HAPPY BIRTHDAY SONG

Lets all sing Happy birthday

25. GIVING OF GIFTS BY THE MOTHER, FATHER AND SIBLINGS IF THE BIRTHDAY PERSON IS UNDER 23 YEARS, OR PARTNER AND CHILDREN IF OVER 23 YEARS INCLUDING PARENTS.

Parents, siblings and partner, you may hand over gifts to the birthday child.

26. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 11: Birthday

27. THE SLIDE SHOW AND VIDEO

We will show you a slide show of _____. Kindly switch the lights off.

28. PROPOSE TOAST

I call upon _____ to propose a toast.

29. BIRTHDAY PERSON'S SPEECH

I call upon _____ (the birthday child) to give a speech.

30. BIRTHDAY PERSON GIVES GIFTS

You may give gifts to grandmother, grandfather, parents, siblings and partner.

31. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE BIRTHDAY PERSON

The birthday person would take that flame of the kuthu lamp and light the God lamp.

32. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 8: Thanksgiving

33. BLESSINGS FOR THE BIRTHDAY PERSON'S FUTURE.

We bless you, _____ and your future.

34. CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations _____ and I wish you a very happy birthday.

35. VOTE OF THANKS

I call upon _____ to give the vote of thanks.

36. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 9: Benediction and the praise of Tamil

37. BLESSING OF THE MEALS

We are now going to bless the food.

38. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 14: Prayer before eating

39. BIRTHDAY RECEPTION: ANNOUNCE SUPPER (BUFFET OR TABLE SERVING)

The food is going to be served as a buffet or table serving.

40. ANNOUNCES FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO TAKE PHOTOS

All families and friends may now have their photos taken with the birthday child.

41. CONCLUSION

This brings us to the end of the birthday ceremony. May you all return to your homes safely.

ARRANGEMENTS

Birthday celebrations are fun.

Before the celebration the following needs to be done:

i. PLAN

Start planning early. Set expectations early by sitting together with the birthday child or adult to learn about what he or she wants for a party. The birthday celebration is to make them happy, so understanding what they want is important. Talk about yours and their priorities.

As you plan the celebration, take time to talk about the years that have gone by, the milestones and memories of people and experiences from previous celebrations. Children cherish what we cherish, and they learn to love the things we value as their parents.

Having a simple, frugal birthday celebration according to Tamil Humanism could be difficult if you are going against the norm and expectations of friends and the extended family. Involve the rest of the immediate family in the birthday discussion as this will make the process a little easier.

Explain your Tamil Humanist approach to birthdays to a few close friends.

ii. SET DATE, TIME AND VENUE

A date and time is to be decided as well as the venue.

Select a few dates that you would like to have the party.

If it's a child's party check whether your child's activity schedule to be sure it does not interfere with the party. Also check if most of your child's friends can make it to the party.

Choose a time of the day when children are most rested and happy preferably in the mornings.

iii. PARTY DURATION

A birthday celebration should last two hours.

15 minutes at the beginning of the party for arrivals. 40-45 minutes for cutting birthday cake, singing, reciting and opening presents. 1 hour for speeches, activities and entertainment.

iv. SELECT A THEME

If it's a child's party select a theme.

Examples of some party themes are baseball, soccer, football, ballet, dinosaurs, Cinderella, etc.

A party should be fun for everyone.

v. DECORATIONS

A few major items for the decorations are fine to give the look and feel of the theme.

vi. INVITATIONS

Invitations can have the standard format. If there is a theme for the birthday, it should be include in here.

Invitations should be delivered a minimum of two weeks before the party. This gives parents time to plan.

vii. FOOD

Serving healthy food is essential.

The children want to be in the party activities so separate long lunch are not essential, just light snacks is perfect. If it's an adult birthday, then lunch and dinner may be served.

viii. CAKE

A traditional cake with the letter 'A' and the name of the child can be on it, can be provided.

Alternatively, the cake can be decorated or shaped to go with your theme, or using the theme colours. An ice cream cake can also be used.

The child or adult blows out the candles then put the cake aside and serve the guests smaller ready made versions of the cake or cupcakes. They are easier to serve, and you will have a lovely cake for the immediate family members.

ix. GOODIE BAGS

Goodie bags are something the guests take home to remind them how much fun they had at the party.

Ensure the items inside are fun.

x. GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Plan at least one activity for the party.

Children's parties can have more games and activities for example colouring with crayons.

An entertainer can be included but not necessary.

The party must be simplified as possible with the least cost. In fact less is more at these parties.

In a children's party, they just want to have fun and eat lots of sweet foods.

xi. INTRODUCTION

The Tamil celebrant welcomes the guests and thanks them for coming on behalf of the host.

xii. BIRTHDAY PERSON ENTERS

The Tamil celebrant announces the entry of the birthday person.

xiii. LIGHTING OF THE KUTHU LAMPS BY PARENTS OR PARTNER

The father or parent of the birthday person will light a kuthu lamp.

xiv. INTRODUCE BIRTHDAY PERSON AND FAMILY ON THE MAIN TABLE

The celebrant introduces the birthday person as well as the family members on the main table.

xv. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE BIRTHDAY PERSON

The birthday person would take that flame of the lit candle and light the God lamp.

xvi. SPEECH BY A FRIEND

A close friend can make a speech.

Speeches should be short with positive memories.

xvii. SPEECH BY A CLOSE RELATIVE

The birthday person is congratulated.

It is an honour and privilege to be able to talk about the birthday person.

The birthday person's life history is told from birth, childhood, teenage and now an adult.

The person's interests and achievements are acknowledged. Tell how proud you, the parents and family are of the birthday person.

Also give your best wishes for his or her future.

xviii. LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES BY PARENTS OR SIBLINGS

The parents or siblings can light the candles on the cake.

xix. BLOWING OF THE CANDLES BY BIRTHDAY PERSON

The birthday person blows out the candles.

xx. CUTTING OF THE CAKE BY BIRTHDAY PERSON

The birthday child or adult cuts the cake.

xxi. FEEDING OF THE CAKE

The parent or partner may feed cake to the birthday person.

Everybody claps.

xxii. SING HAPPY BIRTHDAY SONG AND THE FAMILY JOINS IN

The celebrant sings Happy Birthday and everybody joins in singing.

xxiii. HANDING OVER OF GIFTS BY PARENTS AND SIBLINGS AND PARTNER

The parents, siblings and partner hand over gifts to the birthday person.

xxiv. THE SLIDE SHOW AND VIDEO

The Tamil celebrant announces the slide show and a video will be shown. The lights are switched off.

The birthday person should be aware of the content of the slide show and video.

xxv. SPEECH BY SIBLING

The sibling may give a speech.

xxvi. SPEECH BY PARENT OR PARTNER

The parent may give a speech.

If the birthday person is married the partner can give the speech.

xxvii. PROPOSE TOAST

The guests are invited to lift their glasses to toast the health of the birthday person.

xxviii. BIRTHDAY PERSON'S SPEECH

The birthday person gives a speech.

He or she will thank the Tamil celebrant and parents.

He or she will also thank friends and family relatives for attending the party and for their gifts.

The birthday person will ask guests to enjoy the rest of the evening.

xxix. BIRTHDAY PERSON GIVES GIFTS

The birthday person gives a gift to grandmother, grandfather, parents, siblings and partner.

xxx. VOTE OF THANKS

The celebrant can say the vote of thanks.

A friend or family member can also say the vote of thanks.

xxxi. BLESSING OF THE MEALS

The celebrant blesses the meal.

xxxii. ANNOUNCE SUPPER (BUFFET OR TABLE SERVING)

The celebrant announces supper which could be as a buffet style or table serving.

xxxiii. ANNOUNCES FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO TAKE PHOTOS

The celebrant announces that family and friends may take photos.

xxxiv. CONCLUSION

The Tamil celebrant talks about why the day was so much fun and meaningful.

A thank you card with a picture of the birthday person is sent to all guests.

Chapter 4: Wedding Ceremony

Contents

1. Introduction
2. The Wedding procession enters
3. Give garlands to bride and groom
4. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 1: A is a symbol of God
5. Introduce the wedding couple and families and honour them
6. Lighting of the kuthu lamps by the parent – the fathers of both families
7. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 2: Space is a symbol of God.
8. Lighting of the God lamp by the parent – the mothers of both families
9. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 3: Light is a symbol of God
10. The meaning of a wedding ceremony
11. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 4: The attributes of God are the culture of Eight Divine Virtues
12. Presentation of duties, responsibilities and roles in a marriage to bride and groom
13. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 5: The concept of God
14. The guests say their vows of love and support
15. Blessings of the parents
16. Confirming marriage is of their free will
17. Confirming no lawful impediment to marriage
18. The pledge
19. Joining right hands

20. The exchange of vows
21. Tying thali
22. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 6: Namasivaya is a Tamil Name of God
23. The exchange of garlands
24. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 12: Wedding
25. Giving and receiving of rings
26. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 7: The rejection of fear and superstition
27. Giving and receiving of trays by the siblings of both families.
28. Bride and groom give gifts to parents of both families.
29. Lighting of the God lamp by the couple
30. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 8: Thanksgiving
31. The signing of the marriage register and licence
32. Pronouncement of husband and wife
33. The kiss
34. Blessings for couples future
35. Congratulations and introducing the couple to the gathering
36. Wedding cake: Cutting and feeding of the cake
37. Speech by bride's sibling
38. Speech by groom's sibling
39. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 9: Benediction and the praise of Tamil
40. Bride's speech
41. Groom's speech
42. Vote of thanks
43. Blessing of the meals
44. Readings: Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 14: Prayer before eating

45. Wedding reception: Announce supper (buffet or table serving)

46. Announces family and friends to take photos

47. Conclusion

DIALOGUE

1. INTRODUCTION

All rise for the Bride and Groom.

Recite Ulagelaam

2. THE WEDDING PROCESSION ENTERS

Dear families and friends!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all on this happy occasion to celebrate and witness the marriage of _____ and _____ on this special day in their lives.

You are all very special to this couple because they have asked you to be here to share their happiness and their joy and to be with them as they publicly declare their love and commitment to one another. Each one of you have added value and meaning to their lives in the past.

They have invited all of us to participate in the celebration of their love which they have nurtured for some time.

It is a partnership that was freely chosen by them and it is founded on friendship, trust, respect, love and an exclusive commitment to one another.

It is a partnership that encourages open communication, self-expression, the sharing of knowledge, and also an enthusiasm for life.

It is based on the belief that each person is equally important.

It is the maturing of love, freely given and gladly returned and is both ordinary and extraordinary, because it is about everyday living.

To this sacred moment they bring the fullness of their hearts of love and peace as a treasure to share with one another.

They bring the dreams which bind them together to fulfil them.

They bring their gifts and talents, their unique personalities and spirit as they build their life together.

They believe that marriage is essentially a human institution.

Therefore this ceremony finds its deepest meaning in the celebration of being human.

_____ and _____ are grateful that you have chosen to be here and by your presence, to honor their decision to go forward on this journey as husband and wife.

3. GIVE GARLANDS TO BRIDE AND GROOM

Please wear the garlands.

4. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 1: A is a symbol of God

5. INTRODUCE THE WEDDING COUPLE AND FAMILIES AND HONOUR THEM

When two people come together to add another link in the great chain of the generations, it is right and good that they should give thanks to those who came before them.

Today, we give honor to _____ and _____, and all those whose love and support have made this day possible.

6. LIGHTING OF THE KUTHU LAMPS BY THE PARENT – THE FATHERS OF BOTH FAMILIES

May the fathers of both families light the Kuthu lamps.

7. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 2: Space is a symbol of God.

8. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE PARENT – THE MOTHERS OF BOTH FAMILIES

May the mothers of both families light the God lamps.

9. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 3: Light is a symbol of God

It is sung while the mothers light the God lamp.

10. THE MEANING OF A WEDDING CEREMONY

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens.

A good marriage must be created.

In the art of marriage, the little things are the big things.

It is holding hands.

It is remembering to say, “I love you.”

It is cultivating flexibility, understanding, and a sense of humour.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives, standing together and facing the world.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers the whole family.

It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating your love for each other in many thoughtful ways.

Happiness in marriage is doing things for each other in the spirit of love and having the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.

11. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 4: The attributes of God are the culture of Eight Divine Virtues

12. PRESENTATION OF DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES IN A MARRIAGE TO BRIDE AND GROOM

You have come to love each other deeply and sincerely.

That love has given you the desire to unite in marriage and to establish a home together.

We wish for you the wisdom, compassion, and constancy to create a peaceful sanctuary in which you can both grow in love.

In this ceremony you are dedicating yourselves to give happiness and well-being to each other.

The vows you are about to make with each other is meant to be a beautiful and sacred expression of your love for each other.

Let me ask you both to remember, that your future happiness is to be found in mutual consideration, patience, kindness, confidence, providing tender leadership, protection and affection.

Remember that love, peace, joy and loyalty alone will serve as the foundations of a happy and enduring home.

Remember you are committing yourselves to a dynamic growing relationship of trust and mutually supporting each other, respect, and creating a healthy, happy home.

It is the duty of each of you to find the greatest joy in the company of each other in both interest and affection.

It is a firm belief in your own individual worth and that of the other.

You commit that your responsibility to one another is strong enough to sustain the marriage.

The quality of your marriage will reflect what you put into nurturing this relationship.

Each of you is to make a contribution to the life of the other and to your new life together.

In this way the home which you are establishing will abide through every change.

13. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 5: The concept of God

14. THE GUESTS SAY THEIR VOWS OF LOVE AND SUPPORT

Today I invite you to share the joy of these two people who have found joy in each other.

You, family and friends form a circle of love and support.

The loved ones in this circle have shared peace, have shared laughter and have shared joy.

Through that sharing, ____ and ____ are as they are, in part, because they have known all of you.

You are all a part of their past, and by your presence here, you promise to care with and uphold them as they move into the future.

To show your support I ask you to rise now and make your pledge:

Do you promise to love and support _____ and _____ as they begin their new life together?

If so, say “We Do”

All guests answer: “We Do”

Please be seated.

15. BLESSINGS OF THE PARENTS

Your son and your daughter have been nurtured in your love and guided by your personal counsel.

As they become partners in marriage they ask for your affectionate blessings.

Do you give them your blessings?

Parents answer: “I do” or “We do.”

16. CONFIRMING MARRIAGE IS OF THEIR FREE WILL

Do you come with joy and anticipation to this moment of your own free will when you will be legally joined in marriage?

Couples answer: "I do"

17. CONFIRMING NO LAWFUL IMPEDIMENT TO MARRIAGE

Do you solemnly declare that you do not know of any lawful or medical impediment why you may not be joined in matrimony?

Answer: "I do".

18. THE PLEDGE

You are entering into a sacred agreement as life partners.

Do you pledge to communicate openly, listen to each other and to speak to each other with honesty always?

Answer: "I do".

Do you understand and accept your responsibility, and do you promise to do your very best each day to create a loving, healthy, and happy marriage?

Answer: "I do".

Do you promise to treat each other with love, kindness and compassion?

Answer: "I do".

Do you promise to allow each other to change and develop, to live together as equal and different individuals, and to recognise and accept each other's strengths and weaknesses?

Answer: "I do".

Do you promise to always learn from your shared experiences, and to build from them a full and caring friendship based on trust and on respect?

Answer: "I do".

19. JOINING RIGHT HANDS

Please hold each other's right hands.

20. THE EXCHANGE OF VOWS

And so we come now to the vows and promises that you will make to each other.

Groom and bride, please face each other and join your right hands?

Groom / bride would you please read your vows.

In the company of our dear family and friends and with their love and support, today I marry the one I love.

_____, I accept you as my partner in marriage.

I love you ____ as I love no other.

From this day forward,

I promise to share my life with you.

I promise to tenderly care for you.

I promise to encourage you in the fulfilment of your dreams, to respect the unique person that you are throughout the changes in our lives.

I promise to love you and cherish you; to nurture and support you.

To stand by your side as we share life's joys and sorrows, laughter and pain,

To stand by your side for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health.

I promise to laugh with you in joy and to be a best friend.

With these vows I have just said,

I promise my love to you.

This is the Truth.

I call upon our family and friends present here to witness that I, _____, do take you, _____, to be my lawfully wedded wife (or husband).

21. TYING THALI

The Thali is gold pendent and the Kodi is a single piece of string or gold chain. When the ends are tied it becomes a circle. The two ends symbolises the bride and groom and when joined in marriage becomes one family unit, a circle of love. It is a symbol of the triumph of their love for each other. It alerts other men to respect the dignity of the marriage to the women who wears it.

The Celebrant takes the tray with the thali and says:

‘With this Thali the bridegroom_____ commits to his duty to the bride _____.’

After tying the thali, the Bridegroom then adorns Kungum on the Bride’s forehead. The Bride then adorns ashes on the Bridegroom’s forehead.

The couple says:

Namasivaya, Sivayanama, arutperunsodhi, arutperunsodhi, thanipperungkarunnai,
arutperunsodhi

Potri Potri Potri.

22. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 6: Namasivaya is a Tamil Name of God

Recite the following:

then naatudaya sivane potri yen natra varukkuym iraivaa potri

23. THE EXCHANGE OF GARLANDS

A Garland is many flowers joined together on a piece of string to form one complete circle. Each flower represents a good activity that would be done by the each of the couple for the other. All these good activities make up the triumph of their love for each other. It is a prize to honour the person. It is worn to rejoice their love. It symbolises the joy of a wedding.

24. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 12: Wedding

25. GIVING AND RECEIVING OF RINGS

May I have the rings.

The ring has long been a symbol for marriage.

The circle has no beginning and no end.

The rings you are about to give to each other symbolize the unity and oneness of your two lives.

The wedding ring is a symbol of eternity. It is an outward symbol of the commitment of an inward bond. A circle is a symbol of wholeness, love and of peace.

May the seamless circle of these rings become the symbol of your endless love and serve to remind you of the promise you have entered into today to be faithful, loving, and kind to each other.

And now as a token of your love and of your deep desire to be forever united in heart, you may place a ring on the finger of each other.

Placing the rings on each other's fingers the bride and groom repeats:

_____, with this ring as a symbol of my vows I marry you and I promise you my love and respect.

Together: "This circle will now seal the vows of our marriage and will symbolize the endlessness of our love."

26. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 7: The rejection of fear and superstition

27. GIVING AND RECEIVING OF TRAYS BY THE SIBLINGS OF BOTH FAMILIES.

I call upon the siblings of both families to exchange the trays of gifts.

28. BRIDE AND GROOM GIVE GIFTS TO PARENTS OF BOTH FAMILIES.

Please give gifts to your parents.

29. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE COUPLE

The lighting of the God lamp is a meaningful expression in a wedding ceremony, symbolizing the union of two hearts and lives.

The two outside Kuthu lamps have been lighted to represent both your lives in this moment.

They are two distinct lights, each capable of going their separate ways.

As you join now in marriage, there is a merging of these two lights into one light.

From now on your thoughts shall be for each other rather than your individual selves.

Your plans shall be mutual, your joys and sorrows shall be shared alike.

As you each take a candle and together light the God lamp, thus letting the God lamp represent the union of your lives.

As this one light cannot be divided, neither shall your lives be divided but be a united home.

May the radiance of this one light be an indication of your unity.

30. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 8: Thanksgiving

It is sung while the couple signs the marriage register.

31. THE SIGNING OF THE MARRIAGE REGISTER AND LICENCE

Bride and Groom are now going to sign the Marriage register and this will be witnessed by _____ and _____

32. PRONOUNCEMENT OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

In the presence of this company, you have pledged yourselves to each to the other by exchanging vows, the tying of the thali, the exchange of garlands, the lighting of the God lamp and by giving and receiving of rings,

I, _____, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Marriage Act do hereby pronounce you _____ and _____ husband and wife.

33. THE KISS

You may kiss!

34. BLESSINGS FOR COUPLES FUTURE

May you always communicate openly and honestly with each other.

May your relationship remain one of love and of trust.

May you continue to respect the individuality of the other.

And may the happiness you share today be with you always.

May their marriage be a shared adventure, rich in moments of serenity as well as in moments of excitement.

May their home be a place of peace and where the warmth of laughter is felt.

May they encourage each other in whatever they set out to achieve.

May they, trusting each other, trust life itself and may their love endure forever.

May every joy and happiness be yours.

May your love grow stronger and deeper with each passing year.

35. CONGRATULATIONS AND INTRODUCING THE COUPLE TO THE GATHERING

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I now present to you, Mr. & Mrs. _____ & _____

Applause

36. WEDDING CAKE: CUTTING AND FEEDING OF THE CAKE

The bride and the groom may now cut the cake and feed each other a piece of cake. This symbolises their affectionate love and care for each other which they will display in their married life.

37. SPEECH BY BRIDE'S SIBLING

I call upon _____ (the bride's sibling) to give a speech.

38. SPEECH BY GROOM'S SIBLING

I call upon _____ (the groom's sibling) to give a speech.

39. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 9: Benediction and the praise of Tamil

40. BRIDE'S SPEECH

I call upon _____ (the bride) to give a speech.

41. GROOM'S SPEECH

I call upon _____ (the groom) to give a speech.

42. VOTE OF THANKS

I call upon _____ to give the vote of thanks.

43. BLESSING OF THE MEALS

We are now going to bless the food.

44. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 14: Prayer before eating

45. WEDDING RECEPTION: ANNOUNCE SUPPER (BUFFET OR TABLE SERVING)

The food is going to be served as a buffet or table serving.

46. ANNOUNCES FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO TAKE PHOTOS

All families and friends may now have their photos taken with the wedding couple.

47. CONCLUSION

This brings us to the end of the wedding ceremony. May you all return to your homes safely.

ARRANGEMENTS

i. WEDDING CEREMONY

A wedding ceremony is an expression of worship, reflecting joy, celebration, community, respect, dignity and love.

You and your partner have made a solemn, eternal promise with each other in the presence of the Tamil community.

The guests offer their support, blessings and join the couple in celebrating their wedding.

ii. THE ROLE OF CEREMONY

In Tamil culture ceremonies have been used to mark important events in people's lives. A formal occasion of a ceremony is beneficial.

At a Tamil wedding the couple have the opportunity to declare publicly their love for each other and their aspirations for their future together. This commitment is done in a meaningful and significant ceremony among their family and friends.

The Tamil concept of a wedding ceremony is unique from other cultures. It emphasises values and beliefs while giving expression to two people's personalities.

A couple can get married in a ceremony that reflects their Tamil beliefs. They can express their vows to each other in their own words and understand its meaning and feeling. They can also choose readings, quotes and music which mean something to them.

This wedding in the Tamil spirit celebrates the joy and the beauty of life.

Tamils view marriage as a relationship based on love, concern and respect that allows individuals to grow in their respective ways.

It is the maturing of love, freely given and gladly returned and is both ordinary and extraordinary, because it is about everyday living.

Tamil religion sees the inseparable unity of body and mind, so that emotion and intellect functioning together provide the firmest foundation.

It is a Tamil belief that there is equality between men and women in every way, and so marriage is a cooperative venture in every sense.

It is a relationship based on love, respect and a determination on the part of both wife and husband to adjust to each other's temperaments and conditions, in health or sickness, joy or sadness, ease or hardship.

Marriage is about partnership and sharing, and has less to do with perfection than with loving someone for who they really are, their faults as well as their virtues.

If they can treat each other with tenderness and love then they can look forward to a future of happiness and contentment, whatever life casts their way.

Marriage is one of the most important things that two people will ever do, and it is our privilege to be here with them today as they take these important steps together.

Marriage is a journey, chosen by two human beings, based on mutual love and respect that allows an individual to grow more beautifully than if each walked alone.

The guests by their invitation are asked to accept their shared life together which they create.

The importance of the generations and the generosity of parents and guardians are also appreciated.

The following is a standard format of a Tamil wedding that can be adjusted to suit the couple's needs.

iii. WEDDING PARTY PICTURES

This should begin at least 2 hours prior to the start of the wedding and be finished at least 45 minutes before the ceremony. This allows the hall to be cleared and ready when guest arrive.

A photo booth is set up at the entrance for people to take their photos with the couple before being seated in the hall and supper.

Family and close friend's pictures can all be taken before the wedding. Others may take the pictures after the wedding before the reception.

The photographer and videographer should maintain an attitude of reverence during the ceremony and there should be no flash photography and also to maintain a certain distance from the stage and the guests. People walking around during the ceremony can be distracting.

iv. WEDDING PARTY DRESSED AND READY

The wedding party should be dressed and waiting in the appropriate locations at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony.

v. ENTRANCE OF SANGAM HALL

Three bridesmaids should stand near the entrance of the Sangam Hall or place where the wedding is being held. They will smile, greet and welcome the guests as they arrive. They should have trays with sweet packets for the guests. The groomsmen will take the guest to their seats.

vi. GIFT REGISTER TABLE

A gift register table should be set up at the entrance. The names are entered into a register and the nature of the gift. The gifts are then taken to a table next to the stage of the ceremony.

vii. INTRODUCTION

Soft soothing music should be played prior to the start of the ceremony.

Music plays a significant role in the wedding ceremony.

Ensure that all guests are seated prior to commencement of the marriage ceremony.

The Celebrant or Master of Ceremony will announce the commencement of the wedding and that everyone should stand up.

The Nagasam music plays as the wedding party enters to takes their seats.

Wedding party enters from the front door and walk down the aisle.

The Groom enters first and walks in front followed by his parents, brothers and sisters.

The Bride enters and walks in front followed by her parents, brothers and sisters.

The groomsmen and bridesmaids will walk in pairs.

Groomsmen are from the small Sangam which the groom belongs to. They will seat the grandmothers and parents and be responsible to guests and the gift register.

Bridesmaids are from the small Sangam which the bride belongs to. They will attend to the bride's needs.

The groomsmen and bridesmaid can remind each person to smile.

The parents, brothers, sisters, groomsmen and bridesmaids lead the bride and the groom to the front of the aisle and then take their seats.

Parents are seated on the stage.

The Bride and Groom walk up to the stage and take their places.

The priest awaits the bride and the groom and takes over from there.

At this time the couple is in the centre of the stage.

The seating of the parents in a prominent place recognizes their responsibility for the couple's upbringing. It expresses honour to the previous generations of marriage unions.

If any person is disabled, unwell or infirm due to old age, they should be seated first before the procession begins.

The bride and groom's grandparents, brothers and sisters are seated in the first row or table.

The Flower Girl and Ring Bearer are seated with their parents in the first row.

viii. GIVE GARLANDS TO BRIDE AND GROOM

When the couple is on the stage, the celebrant gives the garlands to the bride and groom.

ix. LIGHTING OF THE KUTHU LAMPS BY PARENTS

Two kuthu lamps and 1 Godlamp and a lit candle are placed on the table.

The mother or parent from the bride and groom family will each light a kuthu lamp. The parent would do this before they are seated.

x. THE OPENING STATEMENT

The opening remarks request the guests to participate in the act of worship to bless the marriage.

The Celebrant will now make the introductions and welcome all guests on behalf of the parties.

xi. HONORING THE FAMILIES

The Bride and Groom gives flowers to both parents on the stage.

They may take flowers and bring them to all the relatives in the front row: grandparents, "adoptive" parents, mentors, etc. if possible.

xii. PRESENTATION OF DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES IN A MARRIAGE TO BRIDE AND GROOM

The celebrant performing the wedding ceremony will present the duties, responsibilities and roles in a marriage to the Bride and Groom.

The purpose of this is to remind the couple of their individual duties and roles in the marriage and prepare them for the vows they are about to take.

xiii. THE GUESTS SAY THEIR VOWS OF LOVE AND SUPPORT

After the guest's vows, a congregational song will allow another opportunity to involve your invited guests into the worship experience. It can set the mood for your wedding ceremony. Songs should be appropriate to the context of your wedding.

xiv. BLESSINGS OF THE PARENTS

Celebrant speaks to a parent or parents asking them for their blessings.

xv. CONFIRMING MARRIAGE IS OF THEIR FREE WILL

Celebrant asks the couple to declare to all present that they have come of their own free will to be married. There are no forced arranged marriages or child marriages in Tamil culture.

xvi. CONFIRMING NO LAWFUL IMPEDIMENT TO MARRIAGE

The couple declares that there are no legal or medical obstacles to their marriage.

xvii. THE PLEDGE

During the Pledge the couple make their promises to each other.

xviii. JOINING RIGHT HANDS

As the bride and groom face one another to say their vows, they join their right hands and publicly commit entering into a relationship. They leave their families and together with their spouse to create a new family.

xix. THE EXCHANGE OF VOWS

The wedding vows are when the couple declares their promises directly to each other.

The Bride and Groom face each other.

They say their wedding vows.

This is the central focus of the service.

During the vows, the couple makes a promise to one another publicly, and the witnesses present.

It is a sacred vow expressing the entrance into a relationship.

The vows may be repeated phrase by phrase after the celebrant or read individually by the bride and groom. Memorization is not recommended.

xx. TYING THALI

The tray is shown to all present for their blessings and good wishes.

xxi. THE EXCHANGE OF GARLANDS

The bride and groom exchange garlands three times.

xxii. GIVING AND RECEIVING OF RINGS

The unending circle of the wedding ring is a symbol of eternity as the circle is continuous. The exchanging of the wedding rings is the outward expression of the inward bond. The couple promise to love and be loyal for eternity to each other.

It represents each one contributing their wealth, possessions, talents, and emotions to the marriage and the creation of the family.

It tells the community of their commitment to be faithful.

The celebrant asks for the rings and holds it above

xxiii. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE COUPLE

The bride and groom would take the lit candles and light the God lamp together.

xxiv. THE SIGNING OF THE MARRIAGE REGISTER AND LICENCE

The couple signs the marriage register.

xxv. PRONOUNCEMENT OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

This pronounces that the bride and groom are husband and wife. At this point a new family is established. The two now form one family separate from other families. Everyone must now respect this union.

The pronouncement officially declares that the Bride and Groom are now husband and wife.

The celebrant may state the authority which allows him or her to make the pronouncement.

xxvi. INTRODUCING THE COUPLE TO THE GATHERING

When the Celebrant introduces the couple to the wedding guests he or she is informing of a new family that is created through marriage.

xxvii. CUTTING AND FEEDING OF THE CAKE

The bride and the groom cut the cake and feed each other a piece of cake. This shows their affectionate love and care for each other. It is done joyfully, lovingly that honours their relationship.

xxviii. CONGRATULATIONS AND VOTE OF THANKS

The vote of thanks is made and guests come forward to congratulate the couple.

The well-wishing of their future is made.

xxix. CONCLUSION

Music plays as the Bride and Groom exit down centre aisle followed by wedding party.

The wedding party exits the hall, in the following order:

Bride and Groom

Bridesmaids and Groomsmen

Flower Girl and Ring Bearer

The bridesmaid and groomsmen return for the guests who are escorted out in reverse order of their entrance. Guests are ushered out one row at a time.

xxx. THE WEDDING RECEPTION

A meal is part of the ceremony as guests share with the couple in the blessings of their marriage.

Chapter 5: Funeral

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DIALOGUE

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear families and friends.

My name is _____ and I am a Tamil celebrant.

On behalf of _____ family I wish to welcome you here today, and thank you for being here. Thank you for your love, for your support, and for sharing this time with them. It means more than you can possibly know.

2. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE FAMILY MEMBERS

May a family member please light the God lamp.

3. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 15: The Soul

These poems are read while lighting the God lamp.

4. CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY

Our thoughts are now with _____'s family, with (insert names of close family and friends)

When we lose someone we love, we are affected in different ways. We are all here today because we care about _____, and his/her family.

We are gathered here today to pay tribute to the life of _____ and bid him/her a final farewell.

Death is a very personal matter for those who know someone close to them that passed away. But we are all affected, directly or indirectly, with the death of an individual, for we are all part of one human community and no one of us is independent and separate.

Though some of the links are strong and some are weak, each of us is joined to all the others by links of family, love, friendship, by living in the same neighbourhood or town or country, or simply by our own common humanity.

Anyone who met _____ always warmed up to this witty and caring man/woman or admires the optimism and determination with which he/she tackled life.

At this time, would our first speaker _____ please come forward.

5. SPEAKER 1: BIOGRAPHY OF _____

I will share some basic facts, pertinent details, about the life of your loved one. And then, you will get to know _____ through the words of those who loved him/her most.

However you are feeling today, it's all good. We are gathered here as a group to honour _____, and to support each other during a time of loss and heartache.

We are here to laugh, to cry, and most of all to think about and talk about this special person, and how he affected those around him.

_____ was born in _____ in the year _____.

He/ she attended the school _____

He /she met husband/ wife at _____

He/ she married _____ and had _____ children.

He/she worked as a _____

His/ her favourite food was _____ and music _____

He/she was indeed a thinker of pure thoughts, a speaker of brave words, a doer of generous deeds has reached the silent sanctuary that all the dead have reached, and where the voyage of every life must end.

We have gathered here to do the last kind acts that a person may do for another person that is to tell his/her virtues and to lay him/her with tenderness and tears in the sacred place of rest and peace.

Let us believe that pure thoughts, brave words and generous deeds can never die. Let us believe that they bear fruit and add forever to the well-being of the human race.

Such a person was _____, to whom we pay the tribute of respect and love.

He/ she was an honest person. He/she believed in self-preservation and in personal independence. He/she knew that, next to finding truth, the greatest joy is love. He/she knew that truth has no fear of investigation and of being understood. He/she knew that truths enemies are ignorance, prejudice, egotism, bigotry, hypocrisy, fear and darkness, and that intelligence, candor, honesty, love and light are its eternal friends. He believed that the virtues are the friends of humanity and the seeds of joy. He knew that consequences determine the quality of actions. In the positive philosophy of Tamil Humanism he found the framework of his creed. In the conclusions of that great philosophy, this sublime and tender soul found the rest, the serenity and the certainty he/she sought. He should preserve to the extent of his power the good he has, by destroying the hurtful, by adding to the knowledge of the world, by giving better than he had received. Each should be the bearer of a torch; a giver of light for all that is, for all to be. For him/her there was but one religion. It was the religion of pure thoughts, of noble words, of self-denying deeds, of honest work for the entire world. It was the religion of Help and Hope. The world was his country and to do good his Tamil religion. Farewell, dear friend. The world is better for your life. Farewell! We loved you living, and we love you now.

6. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 16 Evolution

7. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 17 The Body Is Not Eternal

8. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 18 The Soul Returns To God

9. PERSONAL REFLECTION: PERIOD OF SILENCE

We are now going to pause and remember _____ in our own ways reflecting on a life lived well and with much contentment and happiness with few regrets.

At this point, I would like to have a minute of silence for each of us to remember _____.

Please take a moment in silence.

(1 minute's silence)

Thank you everyone.

10. THOUGHTS ON LIFE AND DEATH FROM A TAMIL HUMANIST PERSPECTIVE

In the presence of life, we say no to death. In the presence of death, we say yes to life!

We come to this gathering, so that we may give expression to the depth of loneliness which the death of _____ has brought upon us. Thus do we share the memories of loss and comfort, of fear and courage, of bitterness and love. However it is love which can triumph over all pain, it is from love which all meaning, beauty and truth flows.

The life of another cannot be sum up by any person. Life is too precious. It remains as it is remembered by those who loved, watched and shared it. For such memories are alive, unbound by events of birth or death. And as living memories we possess the greatest gift one person can give to another.

It is customary for our Tamils, when the one we love dies, to bring together those whose lives were touched significantly by the life of the one who has died. This is the reason for a funeral service.

Such services are a human function to set an experiential marker at the end point of life. It is the conclusion of one human being's journey.

This milestone at the end of a life is an experiential one. It is made up of the memories, the thoughts and the feelings of all who are gathered to celebrate the life of the departed. It is a recollection of what was for a time together and is now over. Here is the one we knew. We think of how our lives were touched by him/her and what he/she meant and his/her memory continues to mean to us.

At the end of a life, we compose a symphony, an ordered creation whose notes and themes are the experiences of the people gathered. Themes dark and bright are sounded to recollect. We put into order the impact of the life of the one who has died. We do it honestly, fully, tenderly and in the spirit of thanksgiving for the quality of that lived life.

Our recollections of _____ should strive to evoke remembrance, thanksgiving, a sense of the uniqueness of his life and a sense of the privilege of having known him/her. It is also a sense of loss, of sadness, a feeling of emptiness and a hint that the ending of his/her life is a rehearsal of what is to come for everyone of us, ultimately.

No-one should be afraid of death itself; it is as natural as life itself. All that has life has a beginning and an end, and life exists in the time between birth and death. For those of us who believe that death brings the end of an individual's existence, life's significance lies in the experiences and satisfactions we achieve in that span of time; its permanence lies in the memories of those who knew us, and in any influence we have left behind. The love and laughter that filled _____ life will live in the memories of his/her family and friends much longer than the sadness caused by his/her leaving.

Transcending our memories of _____ should be a developing sense of trust in the slow, but steady, grace of healing. We live on and will live on, blessed by his/her life and by the memory of he/she who once was and is now gone. We should also be mindful that existence, ours included, is ever changing, yet, in a real sense, not really as our activities are the same. Nothing is lost.

Finally, it is important to remember that, although death awaits all of us along the path of life, it is, nonetheless, part and parcel of life. For without it, there would be no life.

Yesterday is but a memory, and tomorrow is only a vision; but today, well lived, makes every yesterday memories of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Look well, therefore, to this day.

To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose on Earth, A time to be born and a time to die. For _____, who loved life, Death came after a life filled with a love for, and of, his/her family and friends.

In love and respect we have remembered _____'s life, His/her character and personality we commit to our memories, His/her loves and ideals we commit to our hearts, His/her body we

send to its natural end, to be returned to the great cycle of nature.

It is now time for us to bid a final farewell to _____ and I would now ask you all to please stand.

11. THE COMMITTAL

11.1. BURIAL

In placing the coffin of _____ in this hallowed ground, we think again of all that our dear son/daughter, brother/sister, companion and friend meant and means to us. We dedicate this simple plot, amid these natural surroundings, to every beautiful and precious memory associated with him/her.

We lay the coffin in that gentle earth which has been the chief support of humankind, since first they walked beneath the sun. To all human beings, to all living forms, the soil has forever provided the sustenance of life. To that good earth we now commit the coffin of our friend.

11.2. CREMATION

In placing the ashes of _____ in this sea, we think again of all that our dear son/daughter, brother/sister, companion and friend meant and means to us. We dedicate this ocean, amid these natural surroundings, to every beautiful and precious memory associated with him/her.

We lay these ashes in that gentle water which has been the chief support of humankind, since first they walked beneath the sun. To all human beings, to all living forms, the water has forever provided the sustenance of life. To that good water we now commit the ashes of our friend.

12. BENEDICTION

The separateness, the uniqueness of each human life is the basis of our grief in bereavement. Look through the whole world and there is no one like the _____ you have lost. But he/she still lives on in your memories and though no longer part of your lives _____ will always remain a part of your family, of your circle or of you as an individual, through the influence he/she has had on you and the special part he/she has played in your lives.

Now the work is left to us, the living, to carry forth the beauty and joy of that life which has been taken from us. We are forgiven for our grief, for to grieve is to love, to love is to cherish, and to cherish is to give praise and thanksgiving for the life which has blessed us all.

With courage and strength, we hope that our frailty be forgiven, our sorrows redeemed, the wounds of our loss healed, in the sure knowledge that life moves forward and does not linger with yesterday, and that the life before us signals to greater glory.

Let us depart in peace and look to the morning, assured that tomorrow the sun will rise again. Nature gives and nature takes away. Blessed be life, above all, forever.

May the truth that makes us free, the hope that never dies and the love that casts out fear lead us forward together.

I like to leave you with this perspective.

You can shed tears that he/she is gone, or you can smile because he/she has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray for him/her to come back and mourn why he/she has left, or you can open your eyes and see all that he's/she's left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see him/her, or you can be full of love you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember him/her and only that she's gone, or you can cherish his/her memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back, or you can do what he /she wanted: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

We have been remembering with love and gratitude a life that has ended. Let us now leave resolved that we who live on will use our lives more fully and to better purpose for having known _____ and having shared in his/her life.

13. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 19 Praise God

14. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 20 Praise The Holy Name

15. CONCLUSION

Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, love leaves a memory that no one can steal.

On behalf of _____'s family, thank you all very much for joining them today, and for sharing your memories.

There will be refreshments at _____ directly after the ceremony and the family hope to see you all there.

The family would like to invite each of you to the Memorial Service to be held on the first Sunday morning after the eighth day. The date is _____ and the venue is _____.

The family would like to extend thanks to all who have sent cards or called. Your support has been much appreciated at this difficult time. Thank you _____(insert names of those to be thanked, doctors, friends, neighbours, etc.)

There will be a collection in aid of _____ charity or donations may be given to cover the funeral expenses to _____.

All traffic now is directed to the cemetery/ crematorium at _____.

You may please stand

ARRANGEMENTS

A Tamil funeral is humanist in approach. It has warmth and sincerity and focuses honestly and affectionately on the person who has died. It allows family, relatives and friends to express their feelings and to share their memories. It celebrates the life of the person who has died by paying tribute to them and to the life they lived.

A funeral ceremony, should ideally reflect the character of the deceased, and celebrate their life.

Throughout history funeral ceremonies were important as it has been helpful in the early days of bereavement. The public expression and sharing of grief are widely considered an important part of recovery after the death of someone close.

The ceremonies are personal celebrations of an individual's life. It is sensitive, genuine and so much appreciated.

The Tamil Celebrant will make a personal visit to the family to gain an appreciation of what the deceased person was like so as to better present an accurate and sensitive picture of them at the ceremony.

A Tamil funeral will include tributes and readings that reflect the life and values of the deceased.

i. ENTRANCE OF HALL

Six pall-bearers should stand near the entrance of the Hall or the place where the funeral is being held. When the undertaker arrives they will bring the coffin into the hall or home. The undertaker brings the deceased in an appropriate vehicle.

ii. OPENING MUSIC

Tamil music is played as family and friends gather.

Soft soothing music should be played prior to the start of the ceremony.

The Tamil Marai and Naladiyar recital can be played as friends and family arrive.

iii. INTRODUCTION

The opening words of welcome are given.

Ensure that all guests are seated prior to commencement of the funeral ceremony.

The service begins at an appointed time for 1 hour.

Guests should dress formal.

The seating of the family in a prominent place recognizes their relationship with the deceased. They are seated in the first row or table.

The Celebrant will announce the commencement of the funeral.

The Tamil celebrant will introduce himself or herself. The Celebrant will now make the introductions and welcome all guests on behalf of the family and thank them for coming to share their love and support for the deceased and the family.

The celebrant conducting the ceremony may explain what is included in the ceremony. This is the time to explain that a Tamil humanist ceremony celebrates the life lived.

iv. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE FAMILY MEMBERS

The ceremonial table has two kuthu lamps and the God lamp in the centre. The letter A, water, incense, flower and the artificial gold brick with Thiruvalluvar's name on it, is on the table as well.

A family member will light the candle before the ceremony begins.

The family member would take the lit candle and light the God lamp.

The celebrant will include the names of those involved, and their relationship to the deceased.

v. READINGS

Poems are recited.

vi. THOUGHTS ON LIFE AND DEATH FROM A TAMIL HUMANIST PERSPECTIVE

A Tamil humanist perspective on life and death is presented with a philosophical reflection on the themes and nature of life and death.

vii. ADDRESS: EULOGY

A short biography telling the deceased's life story and their character is given.

Invite a person who was close to the deceased to offer brief closing comments, with the aim of leaving those attending with positive or hopeful memories.

The tribute honours the life and character of the deceased. It is an opportunity for mourners to talk about the qualities and experiences that made the deceased so important to them.

The tribute should be approx. 5 - 10 minutes, and may include contributions from other friends or family members.

viii. MOMENT OF SILENCE

A pause for silent reflection takes place before the committal

The celebrant will direct those gathered to pause for a time of collective silence in honour of the person who died.

ix. COMMITTAL

The pall-bearers may take the coffin to the undertaker's limousine where it is taken to the graveside or crematorium.

The committal is when the coffin is buried or conveyed into the crematorium.

If this is an option, you may wish to close the curtains around coffin if it takes place in a funeral parlour.

x. CONCLUSION

The celebrant says the final closing words to end the ceremony and thank everyone on behalf of the family for their presence at the ceremony.

Remind everyone that the deceased will not be forgotten.

If it is a cremation, read out words of thanks from the family and say where the tea will be served after that.

If it is a burial, inform everyone where and when the burial will take place and invite them to attend. Read out words of thanks from the family and say where the tea will be served after that.

xi. EXIT MUSIC

Request everyone to stand for the removal of the coffin.

Music plays as the exit takes place.

The family members to exit first followed by the guests.

The guests are escorted out in reverse order of their entrance. Guests are ushered out one row at a time.

xii. CEREMONY FOLLOWED BY BURIAL

a) WELCOME MOURNERS AT THE CEMETERY

The mourners gathered at the cemetery are welcomed.

b) DISTRIBUTION OF CORDS

This is carried out by funeral director.

c) COMMITTAL: LOWERING OF COFFIN

The celebrant stands at foot of grave and says a formal final “farewell”.

Everyone bows their heads as the coffin is lowered at end.

d) SCATTERING OF EARTH/FLOWERS

Invite those who wish to come forward and cast earth or flowers into grave.

e) COVERING OF THE GRAVE

This is carried out by funeral director.

f) CLOSING WORDS AND CONCLUSION

Remind everyone that the deceased will not be forgotten.

g) THE FUNERAL RECEPTION

Everyone returns to the reception hall or home.

Tea and light snacks are served as part of the funeral ceremony.

xiii. PLANNING A FUNERAL SERVICE

In today's high cost of living consider a home funeral or green burial.

The family must first choose a Tamil celebrant. The Tamil celebrant can implement your plans or speak and make introductions at the funeral service. They will coordinate logistical considerations, and schedule speeches and introductions. They may designate a relative to select music, a friend to make speeches and introductions, and reserve a location and arrange for catering and handle the invitations.

a) GENERAL PREPARATIONS

The Tamil Celebrant will use the following checklist to draft the family's instructions:

1. Who is the funeral service Tamil celebrant?
2. What considerations are already arranged?

3. What will the Tamil celebrant need to arrange?
4. The Tamil celebrant will need to quickly make the necessary legal and logistical arrangements for handling the body.
5. Commit the details to writing of the various logistical concerns. Write down the details, and make sure you have easily located, detailed, and legible notes of the deceased wishes.
6. Who should be invited? Compile a list of those invited. Develop a list of names and addresses, phone numbers, mailing, and e-mail addresses. Decide how to notify the people on the list. When and how will you distribute invitations? What will the invitations say? Will you post a public announcement of any kind? Do you want to mail your announcements if time allows, or would you rather e-mail your announcements? Do you want to make personal phone invitations? Will you make any public announcements, such as an obituary? Design a paper or electronic announcement with the correct details and tone. Do you wish to send group invitations to the members of an association, such as your book club, workplace, or yoga group? Choose a charity for donations or Sangam trust account to offset funeral expenses.
7. Where will the funeral be held? Select a location for the funeral. The location will need to be appropriate to the service, consider logistical issues such as the season, the number of attendees, duration and any special considerations.
8. The following location checklist can be used:
 - 8.1. Reservations: Must the location be reserved and how long in advance? Do you need funds to pay for a location? Estimated size of people in attendance. Address of Funeral Hall or Home.
 - 8.2. Weather: If outdoors, is the location practical for all seasons? Have you planned for cases of rain, cold, snow, or extremely hot weather?
 - 8.3. Space: Is the location large enough to accommodate the funeral? Will there be enough parking for the guests? Will the location be accessible for everyone?
 - 8.4. Special Considerations: Does the location accommodate those with special considerations? Do you want to include family pets or special objects in the ceremony? Is the location pet friendly? Is it wheelchair accessible?
 - 8.5. Scattering Ashes: If you plan to scatter your loved one's ashes as part of the celebration, you will need a location in which scattering ashes is legal.
9. Where will out-of-town guests stay? Will you make arrangements for certain people to stay in your home or with friends and relatives? Have you funds to arrange hotel rooms, and if so, which hotels? Are certain friends or relatives needed to be provided transport?

10. When will the funeral be?
11. Would you prefer a funeral held shortly after death? Would you prefer a home funeral or a service held at the crematorium prior to cremation? Choose a funeral home.
12. How much time does the Tamil celebrant need to make the necessary arrangements?
13. What time of day do you want the funeral service and how long should it last?
14. Which family members or friends will speak at the funeral service? Will they be provided with the subject matter or length guidelines? The speech should be under 5 minutes. The funeral service should be no longer than an hour.
15. What should be read? The biography of the person needs to be compiled. Collect personal information for obituary.
16. Do you want a traditional eulogy, or do you want everyone to read a poem?
17. Music at the Ceremony. Do you want music played at the funeral service? If so, what kind. Is it traditional funeral music, or what is the deceased CD of favourite songs. What music will be played?
18. Do you want anything displayed or distributed at the funeral service?
19. Do you want to display flowers, lights, or wreaths? Consider the environmental & social impact of flowers.
20. Do you want anyone to participate in a particular way?
21. Who are the people the Tamil celebrant can talk to?
22. Where will the alter or ceremonial table be placed? What will be on it eg. Kuthu lamps, Godlamp, water, incense, flowers, candles and the background picture of the Ragasiyum and the letter A.
23. What is the religious background of the family?
24. Will you hire a caterer with a list of pre-selected items, or do you want friends and family to bring a dish? Did the deceased have any favourite foods or drinks? Will you have coffee and light snacks?
25. What announcements to be made? Announce the date of the memorial service.

b) FUNERAL HOME SERVICES PREPARATIONS

1. Choose whether it is burial or cremation.
2. Choose a casket or cremation container.
3. Choose a burial vault or cremation urn.
4. Select the location.
5. Select if it is family viewing or visitation.
6. Decide on a floral arrangement.
7. Choose a photograph to be displayed.
8. Choose what religious items to be displayed.
9. Choose what the deceased will wear.
10. Choose the music, additional hymns or solos.
11. Choose additional scripture and literature to be read.
12. Choose a memorial register.
13. Choose memorial folders and acknowledgement cards.

c) TRANSPORTATION

1. Funeral coach
2. Tamil celebrant's car
3. Family limousine
4. Pall bearer limousine
5. Flower car

d) PARTICIPANTS

1. Tamil celebrant
2. Choose singers and musical participants
3. Choose pallbearers
4. Choose friend or family to do the eulogy
5. Choose friend or family to read the scripture.

e) CEMETERY

1. Choose a cemetery
2. Choose a burial or cremation plot
3. Choose a grave marker or memorial and inscription.

f) FINAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. Ambulance transfer from place of death
2. Application for death certificates
3. Application for a burial permit
4. Set time and date for the service
5. The requesting of preparation and embalming
6. Composing and submitting of obituary
7. Arrange location and food for the reception

g) DRAFTING THE BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The Tamil celebrant will need to ask the following questions in order to make their speech:

Name of deceased and possible nickname

Date of birth

Marriage or partnership

Cause of death and related information

Children, step children and foster children

Spouses of the children

Grandchildren and Step grandchildren

Parents

Siblings

Parents in law

Brothers/Sisters-in-law

Special relatives

Friends/Special colleagues

Special friends

Education

Occupation/employer

Voluntary Service

Awards/Special Recognition

Hobbies

Special interests: social, environment or political organisations.

Offices held in Union, Political Party, Service Organization

Favourite TV Programs

Favourite Music

Books

Singers

Instrumentalists

Authors

Sayings

Community involvement

Religious beliefs

What made him/her special

What do you remember the most

Childhood

Places lived.

Anecdotes

Philosophy of life

Chapter 6: Memorial Service

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- i. Opening music
- ii. Introduction
- iii. Address: eulogy
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- v. Preparations
- vi. Memorial Questionnaire
- vii. Conclusion

DIALOGUE

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear families and friends.

My name is _____ and I am a Tamil celebrant.

I wish to welcome you all to _____ memorial service, and on behalf of _____ family thank you for being here today. Thank you for your love, for your support, and for sharing this time with them.

I invite you to join in a remembrance of memory for _____.

2. LIGHTING OF THE KUTHU LAMPS BY THE FAMILY MEMBERS

May the family members please light the Kuthu lamps.

3. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 15: The Soul

Please respond to each line that I read with the words in your brochure.

4. PRESERVING MEMORIES

We have gathered here to acknowledge the death of _____ whom we have known and loved. We are here to celebrate his/her life.

When someone we have cared for dies, family and friends come together with sorrow in their hearts.

When we lose someone we love, we are affected in different ways.

It hurts now. But that's life. And I promise you, it will get better. The old saying that time heals all wounds is true. It may take months, it may take a year, it may take many years but there will a point where you remember _____, and it will make you smile. You will realize there is no more pain, and thinking about _____ will make you happy. You will be so glad you knew him/her. You would not change one minute of knowing him/her, or being with him/her.

When we face death and loss, we need one another's company for understanding and support.

Just to be together, to look at one another, takes away some of our loneliness and draws our hearts together in the healing which we can offer to each other.

At such times, our separate ways come together in a virtual harmony and assures us of the strength of human goodness and hope.

So we are gathered here today in grief and sorrow, however we are also here together to celebrate a life.

We give thanks we knew this exciting person, to express our gratitude for the days and years we were able to share with him/her.

We are here to remember and celebrate a good and caring life.

By remembering the best of this person, by recalling some his/her finest qualities, by honouring the principles, values, and dreams which guided his/her life, some of _____ enduring goodness flows into us, that we ourselves might be more principled in the days ahead.

We are gathered together for all these things.

But first we must face, full and unafraid, the reality of this death and the grief and loss we feel.

Let us be honest about death. Let us not pretend that it is less than it is. It is separation. It is sorrow. It is grief.

But let us not pretend that death is more than it is.

It is not annihilation. As long as memory endures, his/her influence will be felt.

It is not an end to love. It is not an end to joy and laughter. It would dishonour the one so vibrant as _____ than to make our lives without love, joy and laughter.

Let us be honest with death, for in that honesty we will understand him/her better and ourselves more deeply.

Unfortunately death is an unavoidable part of nature.

Humans are naturally a created part of the universe and therefore could not exist without death.

We inherited death from our most ancient ancestors, from the times when life here on Earth was just beginning.

The process of evolution that has created each of us, which has allowed every one of us to enjoy life's pleasures and happiness would one day end these things.

We must be able to accept death and go from it's presence better able to bear our problems.

From our sorrows should come understanding.

There are those before who have had to suffer loss and there will be those who will yet have to do so.

Let us therefore not be gripped by the fear of death.

If another day be added to our lives, let us joyfully receive it, but we should not depend on our tomorrows.

As we mourn the deaths of our loved ones, we hold on to our memories of them as precious gifts.

Let us make the best memories with our loved ones while they are with us, and let us not bury our love with death.

A memorial service is a time to celebrate the light of the life of an individual. In speech and in silence, each person contributes to the service. Most of the messages will, no doubt, relate to our memories of _____ and our celebration of his/her life and in this neither laughter nor tears are out of place.

5. LIGHTING OF THE GOD LAMP BY THE FAMILY MEMBERS

May the family members please light the God lamp.

6. CANDLE LIGHTING

No person entering this world can ever escape sadness.

Each in turn must bear burdens and in turn bid loved ones farewell as they set out upon life's ventures.

Each one must experience that sad farewell when loved one's embark on the last voyage, and each in turn must take that final journey.

But for those who make this life a pledge to the human spirit, there comes the assurance of a victory that redeems life's pain.

(LIGHT CANDLE)

Though we are a feeble glow of a single flame, for the one who keeps it burning bravely to the end, death is not defeat. We light our candle today to honor the life and living of _____.

7. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 16 Evolution

8. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 17 The Body Is Not Eternal

9. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 18 The Soul Returns To God

10. ADDRESS: EULOGY

Mr/Mrs _____ was born on _____ to _____ in _____.

He/ she grew up in _____.

He/ she was educated at _____ and achieved the level of _____.

He/she took part in youth activities such as _____.

He/she played sports _____.

He/she took part in music _____.

He/she took part in drama at _____ and attended the clubs at _____.

Love came along and _____ was united in marriage to _____.

He/she married on _____ in _____.

His/her vocation was _____.

He/ she was good at _____.

His/her personality traits were _____.

He/she enjoyed _____ and like doing _____.

He/she contributed to society _____.

He/she helped _____ and taught many valuable lessons such as _____. He/she gave the gifts of _____. He/she set an example for others to follow.

He/ she believed in Tamil Humanism and the Tamil value system of life.

You will remember _____ for _____ and _____ and _____.

We will go on remembering, and loving _____, and being grateful for the time you had together.

Now, as your heart feels, please share your memories of _____ with the rest of his/her family and friends.

If any of you would like to stand or come here and share your thoughts of _____ with all of us, I invite you to do so now.

11. SPEAKER 1

I would like to talk about some of my own personal memories of _____, and some of the memories of others that I have talked to over the past few days.

_____ was one of the smartest, most intelligent person I know. He/she was extremely well read. There was no subject no matter that he/she was not well versed in and knowledgeable about.

He/she had a high regard for the sciences and nature. He/she liked _____. I remember him/her telling us about his/her trip to _____.

He/she was generous and supportive of the creative, artistic, and philosophical projects of his/her friends. Without his help we could not have accomplished many important projects that make the world a better place.

_____ was a member of a book group with me some years ago, where we would all read a book and meet to discuss it. Several of the members were aspiring authors and _____'s words of encouragement and guidance were supportive of their efforts, and help sustain their spirits.

He and _____ contributed to their friends hopes and dreams, and helped pay for _____. And he supported my efforts. Without his advice and assistance I personally could not have accomplished many endeavours that are my proudest achievements.

_____ had strong beliefs about religion. He was not afraid to use his wisdom and knowledge to reach bold conclusions, and then stand by his convictions, to support what he knew to be right and condemn what was wrong. He was a free thinker and an atheist of superstition, and a humanist. He was confident and sure of his abilities, and determined to make the most of this life here on Earth.

He did this by celebrating human creativity. In this vein he participated in events like the Pongal festival, which he attending yearly with _____ and their close friends _____.

He made time to enjoy the beauty and awe of nature. In _____ he and his wife _____ toured the big island to soak in its vibrant natural beauty. On that trip he managed to squeeze in a _____ ride, a thrill he always attempted to justify on any vacation where it was conceivably possible.

_____ loved to travel to see the world, and to vacation with his family. In recent years he joined them many times for group trips to places like _____. He told me of his pleasure and enjoyment of these reunions, and also of how much fun he had on the commute there and back on a particular trip when he and _____ first got their car. He spoke of how he relished taking the long way home, driving the back roads, through mountains and wooded countryside.

_____ often indulged his adventurous tendencies and sometimes it got him into trouble, but more often it satisfied his innate curiosity and the thrill of amazement he embraced whenever he learned something new about the world and the universe.

12. SPEAKER 2

The speakers will tell of their memories which include funny incidents, old stories, and special moments.

13. PERSONAL REFLECTION: PERIOD OF SILENCE

No one person can sum up the life of another.

It remains as it is remembered by those who loved and watched and shared.

Such memories are alive because it is not bounded by events of birth and death.

And as living memories, we possess the greatest gift one person can give another.

All of us here have cherished memories of _____.

It is within each of us that the living memories of _____'s life are committed.

To your hearts and minds go the lasting remembrances of this life.

There will now be a period of silence.

So I ask each of you gathered here to now take a moment of silence, and think of _____ and contemplate the many joys he/she experienced in his/her life, and how privileged _____ was to live, love, and be loved by those gathered here.

Let us enter this meditation with reverence and with love.

(Remain silent for about 1 minute)

14. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 19 Praise God

15. READINGS

Tamil Humanist Readings: Chapter 20 Praise The Holy Name

16. CONCLUSION

In tears and in laughter, we dip into the deep well of love and memory. May these memories and those memories not spoken nourish you and keep _____ with you.

We are profoundly glad that _____ lived.

We are glad that we saw his/her face and felt the radiance of his/her friendship and love.

We cherish the memory of his/her words and deeds and character.

Carrying him/her in our hearts, let us now proceed from this place in comfort and in peace, assured that even in this time of loss and sorrow, life remains precious and good.

May we also on this day reawaken in our hearts an appreciation for the gifts of life and other persons.

Let us honour the life of _____ by living, ourselves, more virtuously and loving in the days ahead.

It is completed. We have bid loving farewell to _____.

As you return to the routines of your lives, go in love, and live in peace.

ARRANGEMENTS

i. OPENING MUSIC

Tamil music to be played as family and friends gather.

The recitation of the Tamil Marai or Naladiyar can be played.

ii. INTRODUCTION

The person who has died is honoured and remembered. A spirit of gratitude, healing, forgiveness, renewal and love is invoked. Words of blessing and inspiration are offered for the living.

Memorial services should create space for the tears to flow. An effective memorial service will do both celebrate a life and to mourn a death.

The Tamil celebrant provides words of comfort, and to keep the mood light in the spirit of remembering your loved one.

The celebrant wants the memorial service to be a celebration of life, with smiles and happy tears and memories shared.

It's about remembering, honouring, and celebrating the deceased's life.

Talking about the person you've lost is important, and sharing the good, the bad, and the funny helps with healing.

Hearing the thoughts and memories of others who cared about your loved one is truly empowering.

The opening remarks set the tone and create space for what people are feeling, when they enter that space to honour someone who has died. It defines the space as sacred. The name of the dearly departed one or the deceased must be mentioned.

The first words invoke a spirit of love and healing to prevail. It should never be offered casually. These words set the tone for the entire service.

The tone or style will be in keeping with the spirit of the person who died. It can be dignified, warm, creative, pious, earthy, sophisticated or down-to-earth.

This will come across as the person is speaking and in the preparation of the meeting space as the words spoken. There will always be something in the opening words that invites the spirit of the person into that space.

Readings and music nourish the soul and causes emotional release. They have the power to offer spiritual nourishment and to touch universal chords of human feeling. Because of this, they need to be carefully chosen, and it should be as inclusive as possible of the various perspectives that people in attendance will have.

The readings used should be selected intentionally and used sparingly. People do not come to a memorial service to hear a long sermon or philosophize about death. They come in the presence of death to grieve and reflect on what is meaningful in life. They come to be comforted and uplifted in their time of loss. Read a short poem or a short scriptural selection. It should be chosen to serve a very specific purpose at a particular time in the service.

Give an explanation of a text from the Tamil Marai, or a brief message on the brevity of life, and things Thiruvalluvar wants you to know, and how we can handle grief.

The selection of music should offer comfort or reflection. Music is the language of the heart and a powerful source of healing. Its selection will be according to individual tastes and by the style the family wants for the service.

Identify the song or music to be played, along with its author or composer. If those attending will be asked to sing along, provide the lyrics of the songs.

If there's a live performance, also include the names of those performing, along with their relationship to the deceased.

Music should be used once or at most twice during the service. It may be something requested by or composed for the deceased. Or it can be a quiet reflective piece following a reading. If music is likely to evoke such powerful emotions, it should be used only at a time such as this.

There is a time of silent meditation.

iii. ADDRESS: EULOGY

As part of a eulogy invoke the person's presence by stating that which was especially meaningful to the person, or particularly reflective of the person's life.

The main part of the service is spoken by family and friends. The biography is brief and, like a pencil sketch, it offers a glimpse into the complexities of a life lived in relationship with self and with others. Like an art work it is then filled in by those who make personal remarks and give shading and definition to the sketch.

The speakers will narrate the life story of the deceased.

The tribute that is offered should include the name of the speaker or speakers, and their relationship to the deceased.

The celebrant should also mention if those attending are also invited to share their thoughts.

Tribute includes contributions from friends and relatives of his/her life story.

Time is an important factor. A memorial service is emotionally intense. A service should not extend more than an hour. If you want to keep a service within a particular time frame, you should give each speaker clear boundaries and time limits for each speech. Speakers can be given sufficient time to share their remarks which ordinarily evoke both tears and laughter.

iv. READINGS

A responsive reading brings participation.

This ritual brings us into harmony where we connect with one another on a spiritual level.

v. PREPARATIONS

1. Where will the memorial service be held?
2. Will you document the event with a photo album or a DVD recording? A professional photographer or videographer needs to be hired. Do you want the video of the memorial service available online for friends and family?
3. A memorial service needs to focus on a life celebration to give family and friends a joyous occasion for remembrance. It's a positive step in remembering, honouring, and celebrating the life of the loved one.

4. Did you want to create a history of your loved one's life? Do you want people to bring certain items to the memorial service, such as a photo or an object associated with a story or memory? Do you want them to participate by sharing a memory, a picture, a thought, and a special memory? This can be written or glued or taped into a memory book
5. Do you want favourite photos, images, or artworks of your loved one displayed?
6. It is crucial to meet with those who survive in order to get the necessary information.
7. The Tamil celebrant prints the entire memorial message, poems and Scriptures and gives a bound copy to spouse, parents, children, and siblings. An unbound copy is also provided for them to make more copies if anyone that wish to have one.

vi. MEMORIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of deceased and their nicknames

Date of birth

Childhood

Places lived

Anecdotes

Philosophy of life

Marriage or partnership

Cause of death and related information

Children, step children and foster children

Spouses of the children

Grandchildren and Step grandchildren

Parents

Siblings

Parents in law

Brothers/Sisters-in-law

Special relatives

Friends/Special colleagues

Special friends

Education

Occupation/employer

Armed Forces/Active Service

Awards/Special Recognition

Hobbies

Special interests i.e. Green peace, Amnesty International, soccer club etc.

Offices held in Union/Political Party/Service Organization

Favourite TV Programs

Favourite Music

Books

Singers

Instrumentalists

Authors

Sayings

Community involvement

What made him/her special?

What do you remember the most?

Who else can I talk to?

Who would like to speak at the funeral/memorial?

Kuthu lamps, God lamp, candles, incense, water, artificial gold brick with Thiruvalluavar's name on it, pictures

Music at the ceremony

Religious background of the family

Estimated size of people in attendance.

Address of Hall, Home

Refreshments, coffee and sandwiches

Announcements to be made

Anything else people would like to share

vii. CONCLUSION

In closing the service try to uplift the emotions and offer peace, hope, and promise of the future.

▪ FOUNDER OF TAMIL HUMANISM

❖ Thiruvalluvar



Thiruvalluvar is the founder of Tamil Humanism and is the author of the Tamil Marai. He is an internationally celebrated Tamil humanist. Thiruvalluvar's Path of Tamil Humanism is the Path of Virtue.

Thiruvalluvar was born in Mayilapur in Tamil Nadu on 15 January 31 BC. It is the day after the Tamil New Year.

Thiruvalluvar as a youth grew into a student, farmer and state advisor. He was a textile weaver by profession. Thiruvalluvar fell in love with Vasuki and their marriage was solemnised. She was a chaste, devoted and an ideal wife. Thiruvalluvar showed by example that a person can lead the life of a householder and at the same time lead a life of righteousness and with respect. A beautiful daughter was born. They named her Mullai and brought her up with loving care.

In 300 BC, Elala Chola, the King of the Tamil country ruled over Eelam. Elelasingan was his descendent and ship merchant of Mayilapur. He accepted Thiruvalluvar as his teacher and was his first disciple. One day in the evening, Elelasingan and Mullai met in a garden and they fell in love with each other. Thiruvalluvar solemnized his marriage with Mullai.

In 21 BC, Uggiraperuvazhuthi, the Tamil King, decided to send a delegation to Augustus Caesar and strengthen the trade link. He told the Romans visiting him that he is sending a delegation of merchants to Rome with Elelasingan as leader. Elelasingan left for Rome taking leave from Mullai. He left in the month of July and he promised Mullai he will return in December.

Thiruvalluvar saw that many people in this world are living without understanding humanist principles. He stayed in his house in Mayilapur and began writing his book under a LLuppai tree.

He formulated the concepts based on the 70 000 year old oral tradition of humanism and the 5000 year old Indus valley civilization, and the civilization of the four Tamil kingdoms of Pandya, Chola, Chera and Eelam. He wrote the philosophy of humanism into couplets in a book which he called Tamil Marai (Tamil Humanist Scripture). Thiruvalluvar also called it 'Muppai'.

Muppai means three kinds of subjects which are righteousness, wealth and love. Thereafter he decided to travel propagating humanist principles to all people.

He travelled to Madurai to submit his work, 'Muppai', to the Pandya king. The Pandya kings ensured that many Tamil poets flourished. The Tamil Sanggam of Madurai which is an assembly of eminent poets, scholars and researchers called his work 'Thirukural'. The Tamil Sanggam introduced the Thirukural to the world. The Tamil Marai is considered as the 'Sacred Word of God'. Thiruvalluvar is regarded as a Tamil prophet by the Tamil community.

Thiruvalluvar said to the King: 'a small dew drop depicts even a Palmyra tree, so also the Kural. Oh King, spread these spotless couplets. Preach to the world the humanist message of the Tamil Marai.'

The Tamil Calendar is dated from the birth of Thiruvalluvar and is called Thiruvalluvar Aandu.

The Tamil New Year begins on the 14 January which is the 1st day of the 1st month (Thai) of the Tamil calendar. The next day is celebrated as Thiruvalluvar Day as the 15 January is the birthday of Thiruvalluvar. This celebration of New Years Day and Thiruvalluvar Day is the Pongal Festival.

▪ LEADERS OF TAMIL HUMANISM

The two important leaders of Tamil Humanism are Mr. Seenivasa and Mr. R.M. Moodali. They are the two main authors of the books on Tamil Humanism. Therefore the books on Tamil Humanism are called the 'SEENIVASA - MOODALI VERSION'. They are the revivalists of Tamil Humanism.

❖ Seenivasa

Seenivasa Padayachi was a great advocate of the Tamil Religion. He tirelessly propagated Tamil Spirituality in Tamil Nadu and in South Africa.

The story of Seenivasa Padayachi is but a legend. The life of Seenivasa Padayachi and what we know is largely derived from oral traditions. What remains of his existence is the Tinley Manor Ragasiyam which he built in 1889 and the scriptures he recited with his last breathe in that Sanggam.

Seenivasa Padayachi was born in 1861 in Chidambaram. His father was Sabapathi. He was 28 years old when he arrived in Durban. He was educated in Tamil and English. His wife was Valliammal and she was born in 1867 in Chidambaram. Seenivasa and Valliammal had three children.

Seenivasa's father Sabapathi was a learned scholar and a Priest at Chidambaram. Some say he was a great yogi in Chidambaram. Sabapathi was born around 1801. Sabapathi taught Seenivasa the Tamil religion and culture in its purest form. He believed in Tamil Humanism and the Ragasiyam is the highest form of worship. He wanted all Tamils to worship in the Ragasiyam. Sabapathi's vision is: 'A Ragasiyam in every town and village'. However the Nayak Brahmins resisted and did not want all people to have the Truth.

Legend says that Sabapathi's grandfather who was born around 1681 was also a Priest at Chidambaram. He promoted the Tamil religion and the freedom of all to worship the Ragasiyam. The Ragasiyam is a Meditation and Cultural Hall. He resisted and challenged the Nayak Military rule.

However the Nayak Hindu Brahmins still dominated the villages and Tamil Religion was still forbidden. This led to a conflict between the Nayak Hindu Brahmins and Seenivasa Padayachi when he promoted the Path of Virtue, the Tamil Religion.

He condemned the village chief and Nayak Brahmins in Chidambaram for promoting South Indian Hinduism. He encouraged the villagers to follow Tamil Humanism which is the Tamil religion. The villagers protest was increasing against the Nayak Brahmin priests.

This conflict forced him into exile. If he continued living there his life and his family's safety was in danger. The Nayak Brahmin persecution forced him into exile. His exile brought him to the shores of South Africa, keeping the Tamil religion alive.

He took his only priceless possession the Tamil Marai and together with his family boarded the ship headed for South Africa.

Sabapathi gave Seenivasa his blessings to go to South Africa to protect the faith. He encouraged him to travel abroad to save the Tamil beliefs.

When Seenivasa arrived the first thing he did was to go and search for land to build the Ragasiyam as per his father's wishes. He found many Tamils living in the North Coast of Natal.

Seenivasa built the first Ragasiyam outside of India for the Tamils in Tinley Manor, Natal, South Africa. It was built out of wood and iron around July 1889. Alagiri also helped Seenivasa with the construction of the Ragasiyam.

The Ragasiyam is the Hall for the Praise of God. The congregation in Tinley Manor assembled there and in front of them is a room of empty space. In this room hangs the golden leaves with the Tamil alphabet on it. This Ragasiyam is the purist form of Tamil worship. Tamils worship God in this way for thousands of years. They recited the Tamil Marai and other scriptures and conducted their ceremonies in this Ragasiyam.

Seenivasa was involved in promoting the Tamil religion and culture in Tinley Manor. When his indentured contract expired after 5 years he moved to Germiston in 1894, Transvaal now called Gauteng. Seenivasa moved to Transvaal (Gauteng) because he knew there were many Tamils living here. In 1895 he built another Ragasiyam in Germiston. His vision was that wherever there is a Tamil community there should be a Ragasiyam.

During his stay in Germiston, he opened a cigar factory. He would travel from Germiston to Ottawa, Tongaat then to Tinley Manor to buy the Tobacco leaves and bring them to Germiston. It was a flourishing business as he supplied the mines and shops with cigars. He hired a factory manager to manage the cigar manufacturing while he was away in Tinley Manor. He was a highly spiritual person always in meditation and study of the Tamil religion. Around 1900, while he was away in Tinley Manor, his wife Valliammal made a mistake and had an affair with the factory manager.

On his arrival back to Germiston he came to know of it. He was disappointed but he forgave her. So he divorced her and decided to move back to Tinley Manor in Natal, KZN.

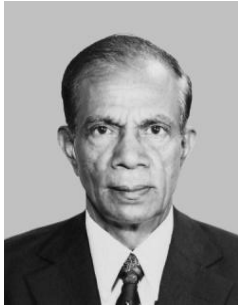
He gave her the house and the cigar business which made her financially independent. The children were well provided for and even their grandchildren still were financially well off. Seenivasa moved to Tinley Manor permanently in 1900. He lived there in meditation and study in the Tinley Manor Ragasiyam and established a Tamil Sanggam. He remarried to Alamalu and they had four children.

Alamalu was born in 1872. Alamalu was an excellent caregiver and took care of Muniamma like her own child. Alamalu together with Muniamma, Lutchmana and Subbu visited the Tinley Manor Ragasiyam in 1901. Seenivasa met Alamalu and admired her caring and family qualities. She lived with the Lutchmana Naik's family until she got married to Seenivasa Padayachi in 1901. When Seenivasa married Alamalu, she moved to Tinley Manor. She eventually lived in Tinley Manor for the rest of her life.

He propagated Tamil Humanism amongst the indentured labourers. He spent the rest of his life promoting the Tamil religion and culture in the Tinley Manor Ragasiyam.

His last day on earth was unforgettable. He took his wife and children to the Tinley Manor Ragasiyam. He entered the Sanggam. Seenivasa Padayachi sat down in the Tinley Manor Tamil Sanggam, facing the congregation, his friends, his family and children for the last time. He smiled at his loving wife, Alamalu, and his children and began to speak about Tamil Humanism. He praised God through words, recited all the Tamil scriptures in English and Tamil and while chanting 'Namasivaya' in the Sanggam he collapsed and died peacefully. And now the essence of Seenivasa Padayachi's recitation of Tamil Spirituality is presented to you.

❖ R.M. Moodali



R.M. Moodali



Kamatchi Moodali

R.M. Moodali is a political activist and an internationally renowned humanist. He made an immense contribution to the transformation of South Africa.

Rajoo Munisami Moodali was born on 31 October 1907. He was the son of an indentured labourer Thayi. Thayi came from a district called South Arcot in Tamil Nadu. In 1914, Thayi died at the age of 41 years and R.M. Moodali was placed in an orphanage.

From 1918 to 1930, he worked on Apartheid farms for a Mr. G. Duncan. In 1931 he worked as a waiter at Victoria hotel. In 1935, he worked for the Hulletts family as a chauffeur. In later years he did part time bookkeeping for small companies as White businesses did not give him work because of the Job Reservation Act.

He went to the Wesleyan Missionary School in 1912, and had to leave school at Standard Four to work on the farm. In 1931 he completed a Bookkeeping course part time through correspondence. In 1940's he join the Study Circles and learnt politics and economics. This was the beginning of his political career.

In 1940, he joined the South African Communist Party. Latter he joined the ANC and the NIC. In the 1980's he joined the UDF in the anti- Apartheid struggle. He continued to be involved in politics until 1994, that's a total of 53 years struggling for Human Rights.

R.M. Moodali witnessed the rise and fall of Apartheid and participated actively in the Anti-apartheid struggle. Throughout his life, he was a Human Rights activist. He attended the protest meetings. He received pamphlets, posters, listened to Radio Freedom, the Voice of the ANC and distributed the pamphlets and messages from door to door. He was a freedom fighter against colonialism and Apartheid. His response is the way millions of people responded to the leaders, until the disbanding of the Natal Indian Congress and UDF structures.

R.M. Moodali was also a cultural activist. He belonged to various cultural organisations such as Stanger Youth Orchestra, Stanger Debating Society, The Rationalist Association of South Africa, Pretoria Tamil Rationalism Society, The Humanist Association of South Africa, Natal Buddhist Society, The Thirukural Society, International Movement for Tamil Culture: South Africa and many others. In the 1980's he suggested to his family and Babs about forming a Tamil humanist international society. He encouraged Mr Rowley Arenstein his old friend from the liberation struggle to join. R.M. Moodali was a loving person who went about his daily life with the universal principles of humanism. He was a humanist and a convinced atheist. He was talkative and an eloquent speaker.

He was also a cultural activist who promoted the reformation of Tamils by rejecting the caste system, superstition, rituals and fatalistic beliefs. The most important thing that had to change was the Tamil belief system in order for them to become progressive. He was involved in promoting the Tamil culture and language. His understanding of the Tamil Marai was from a Tamil perspective which is the concept of the Moodali version.

He promoted the Tamil language and he advocated other cultural and linguistics groups to promote theirs in unity and harmony as South Africans. He advocated South African multiculturalism to enrich the cultural fabric. The various cultural and linguistic identities of the world are the elements that make the world's multicultural social fabric beautiful and joyful.

R.M. Moodali has personally helped many people by providing them with financial, emotional support, advise and assisted them with legal issues. He helped people overcome their material needs. He was always helping people.

R.M. Moodali married Kamatchi Moodali, the granddaughter of Seenivasa Padayachi on 22 January 1944. She was a dutiful wife to R.M. Moodali and a loving mother. She was an exceptional cook and always generously took care of others. They lived mostly in Bull Bull Drive and Desainagar. They had two daughters and a son Thiagesan (Babs) Moodali who was a successful businessman and philanthropist. He read a lot of health books and how to prevent diabetes. He did not drink alcohol nor did he smoke. He led a healthy lifestyle.

R.M. Moodali conducted much research into Seenivasa Padayachi and reunited the two families from Gauteng and Natal, KZN. He retold the story of Seenivasa Padayachi to all who visited him.

He had many major achievements. In 1931 he became a certified Bookkeeper. In the mid 1930's he was expert at playing the Violin and the Banjo. From 1936 to 1941, The Safety First Association awarded him 6 Diplomas, a Bronze medal, then finally a Gold Medal for Driving. He always owned a vintage Borgward car. In 1960's he bought a 6 ¼ acre farm in Bull Bull Drive. On 3 October 1998 at Technikon Natal, R.M. Moodali was honoured for his role in the human rights struggle. In 1994, he was 53 years involved in political activity in the ANC, NIC

and SACP. On 23 September 2007, he celebrated 60 years of marriage to Kamatchi. On 1 January 2001, he was 71 years involved in cultural activity. On 31 October 2007, he celebrated his 100 years birthday. He passed away on 9 April 2008 in Tongaat.

❖ **Thiagesan Rajoo Moodali (Babs)**



Thiagesan Rajoo Moodali

Thiagesan Rajoo Moodali, known to family and friends as Babs, was born on 26th April 1951. He is the son of R.M. Moodali. Babs was an outstanding entrepreneur and a successful businessman and a great philanthropist.

His philosophical religious outlook was similar to that of his father. He was a committed Tamil Humanist. He never performed any rituals nor did he believe in any superstition. He tirelessly kept the flame of humanism alive by advocating it among family members and the South African community. He began writing the Biography of R.M. Moodali but did not see its publication.

He had a quiet personality who never complained about anything. His disposition was always pleasing others and even making sacrifices at his own expenses. He was hardworking, honest, generous and a charitable person. He valued punctuality. He always had a smiling face and a unique laughter.

He completed his schooling at Chatsworth High School. He enjoyed drawing and sketching as a hobby. His other interests were baking and he made the best Christmas cake and pudding. He

also specialised in making sweetmeats and his favourite was Chana Margan and Burfi. On Sundays he also made scones for tea time and he helped his mother Kamatchi Moodali to make queen cakes.

He started off his career when he was in school by repairing cars. He enjoyed fixing things at home. He repaired the Borgward car engines and did welding and spray painting. He worked as a manager of a Bus company in Durban. He thereafter took a career in the field of instrumentation. He was a highly skilled person with great entrepreneurial skills. He became the CEO of Zimbali Engineering and he negotiated many contracts with SAB.

He bought land at Desainagar, Tongaat and built a big family house and owned a luxury Mercedes Benz. He loved his gardening and spent hours maintaining it. He took care of both his parents giving them the best lifestyle and health care. He was always conscious of his health, eating correctly and exercised. He also read a lot of health books and how to prevent diabetes. He did not drink alcohol nor did he smoke and also led a healthy lifestyle. Although he had excellent qualities as a father, he never married nor did he have any children.

He supported many charities and NGO's such as the Association of Mouth & Foot Painters. He also supported the Charity Circle. He made donations to Childline, The Avril Elizabeth Homes of South Africa, Age-in-Action, and St John. Childline offers counselling and support to children. Age-in-Action makes a difference in the lives of the aged. The Avril Elizabeth Homes allows the mentally handicapped to live their lives in a warm and nurturing environment. St John provides medical assistance.

He was involved in community projects of Desainagar. He attended Civic meetings and strove to keep high standards of maintaining the suburb. He was also a member of the ANC of the local Tongaat branch. He helped organise feeding schemes in the informal settlement and held meetings with their leaders.

In October 2013 he was diagnosed with leukaemia and was hospitalised for three weeks undergoing chemotherapy. On 2 December 2013, he sadly passed away. His death at an early age was a great loss for the Tamil Humanist community.

▪ ABOUT THE WRITER



Thiru Moodali

Thiru Moodali is an academic, a researcher, a Life Coach, and a social and cultural activist.

After high school he completed a B.Admin degree from the University of Durban-Westville (UKZN). He successfully completed his post graduate qualifications at the University of South Africa, graduating in a Honours Degree, Hons. B.Admin (Unisa), and a Master's Degree, M.Admin (Unisa).

He belonged to the University SRC publications committee and SANSCO which was affiliated to the UDF during the anti-apartheid campaign. He participated in many mass marches and protest activities.

He took part in various social and cultural activities and assisted many community projects such as creating awareness of Human Trafficking, feeding schemes, clothes distribution and book distributions to promote the 'culture of reading'. He assisted the aged, the orphans, and the homeless in these drives as well as the HIV/Aids homes. He has been on many committees of charity that supported feeding schemes.

Thiru Moodali spent the past 25 years in Marketing and as a Senior Manager involved in coaching and mentoring employees to reach optimal performance. This experience meant that he

came face to face with the concerns and challenges facing employees at all levels up to top management level.

After he read Tamil literature, and understood its true meaning, he discovered that his purpose in life is working with people one on one or in groups to transform their lives so that they can develop their full potential. He believes that every person should live a life of excellence and quality.

As a qualified and certified life coach, Thiru Moodali holds the following certificates:

Life Coach

Negative Emotional Therapy Practitioner

Neuro-linguistic Programming Practitioner

Transformation Coach

He is actively conducting workshops that campaigns for a humanist lifestyle and creating support groups that will sustain a humanist culture.

He has written and edited several books. As a spirit-writer (ghostwriter) for R.M. Moodali, he recorded the oral tradition of humanism and wrote the following books:

1. Tamil Humanism
2. Tamil Spirituality
3. Tamil Humanist Scriptures
4. Writings of the Tamil Saints
5. Biographies: Tamil Prophet and Tamil Saints
6. Humanist Meanings in Tamil Religious Literature
7. Tamil Humanist Ceremonies
8. Tamil Humanist Readings
9. Tamil Calendar
10. Diacritic Tamil
11. Timeline of Tamil History
12. UNKNOWN CITIZEN: A Biography of R.M. Moodali

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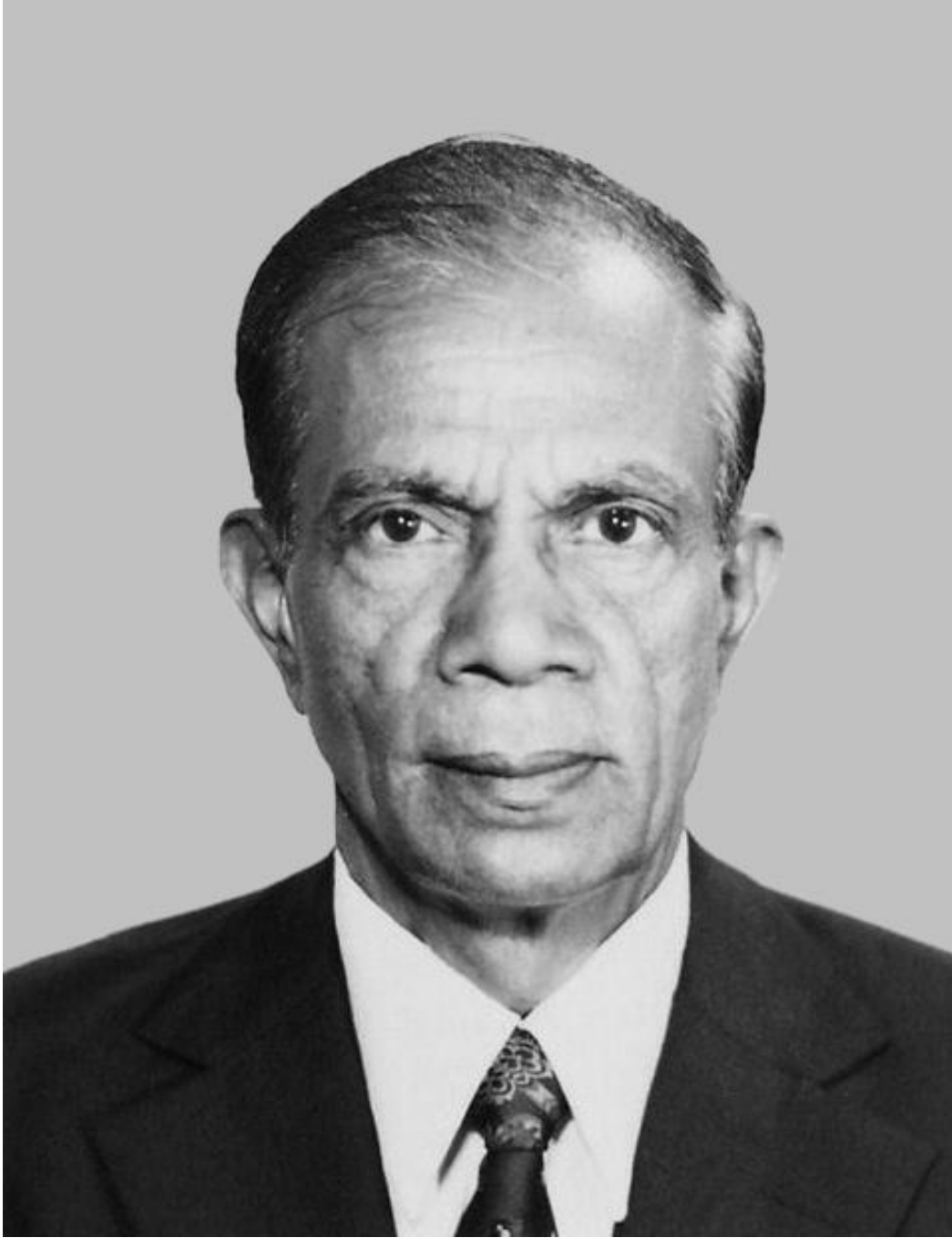
Thiruvalluvar



Thiruvalluvar Statue



Ragasiyam



R.M. Moodali

Life Coach



Thiru Moodali

Thiru Moodali is a Life Coach helping those who want a meaningful life in this world. The counseling and coaching given is based on the principles of Tamil Humanism.

He provides coaching for all life situations such as:

- Relationships, Family and Marriage issues
- Finances and business issues
- Work, Career and Entrepreneur challenges
- Health and Wellness issues
- Parenting and early childhood development issues
- Educational challenges
- Retirement challenges
- Death, Divorce and loss of loved ones
- Anger Management
- Low self-esteem
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Alcohol And Drug Abuse

Life Coach

Negative Emotional Therapy Practitioner

Neuro-linguistic Programming Practitioner

Transformation Coach