

Death & Burials

Isaiah 22:22

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder ...



Burial in the East is not nearly the expensive affair that it is in the West. The Easterners believe that since the soul has departed, the body that is left knows nothing anyway, so it is not thought necessary to spend money on it.

It seems to me that Hindus know how to die more gracefully than some Christians. The Hindu believes that dying is just like changing a suit of clothes, and that when he dies, he will immediately be given another body. A Hindu seems to have a premonition as to when he is going to die, so he puts on his good clothes, lies down on the bed and calls the family to the bedside to give them a final blessing. The Holy Book is brought and a suitable passage is read. Then he raises his hand in blessing, and expires. It is the honor and duty of the eldest son to close the eyes. In Genesis 46:4 we find God promising Jacob:

I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up *again*;
and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

The son who closes his father's eyes in death is the son which inherits the father's place in the family. Sometimes the father designates his heir before the hour of his death; however, this is done by putting a white robe on the son and laying the keys of the household upon his shoulder. Doubtless this was the significance of the robe which Joseph wore, and which infuriated the older brothers so much. A further reference to the keys on the shoulder may be found in Isaiah 22:22:

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder ...

Speaking, of course, of Christ who received the key from his father in heaven.

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