

The Significance of the 6th Month
and 11 ½th Month Prayers in
Regards to the Death of a Person



The Spiritual world – Vaikuntha-loka.

{A note: - There has been some confusion in regards to when these prayers are to be performed. The Garuda Purana yet again gives us insight into this matter.}

After the 12/13th day puja after the funeral of a deceased, one offers 16 pindas (rice-balls offered to the departed one) one pinda every month plus four-addition pindas mentioned below for the next 11 ½ months. This entails performing a full puja for each of the 16 pindas similar like the 12/13th day puja. The Pindas are offered from the date of the Disposal (Via Cremation or Burial) of the body. This is confirmed in the **Garuda**

Purana Preta Khanda 10.21 The calculation of the number of days for carrying out the rituals is based on the time of cremation or burial. “The corpse is placed on the pyre and the two pindas are offered; from the time the Pinda is placed in the hand of the corpse, the departed soul assumes the name (Preta), until the Sapindi ceremony is concluded.”

The breakdown of when these pindas are offered are as follows:-

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| The 1 st Pinda :- | Offered 15 days after the date of the funeral. |
| The 2 nd Pinda :- | Offered one month after the date of the funeral. |
| The 3 rd Pinda :- | Offered 45 days after the date of the funeral. |
| The 4 th Pinda :- | Offered two months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 5 th Pinda :- | Offered three months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 6 th Pinda :- | Offered four months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 7 th Pinda :- | Offered five months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 8 th Pinda :- | Offered 5 ½ months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 9 th Pinda :- | Offered six months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 10 th Pinda :- | Offered seven months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 11 th Pinda :- | Offered eight months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 12 th Pinda :- | Offered nine months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 13 th Pinda :- | Offered ten months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 14 th Pinda :- | Offered eleven months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 15 th Pinda :- | Offered 11 ¼ months after the date of the funeral. |
| The 16 th Pinda :- | Offered 11 ½ months after the date of the funeral. |

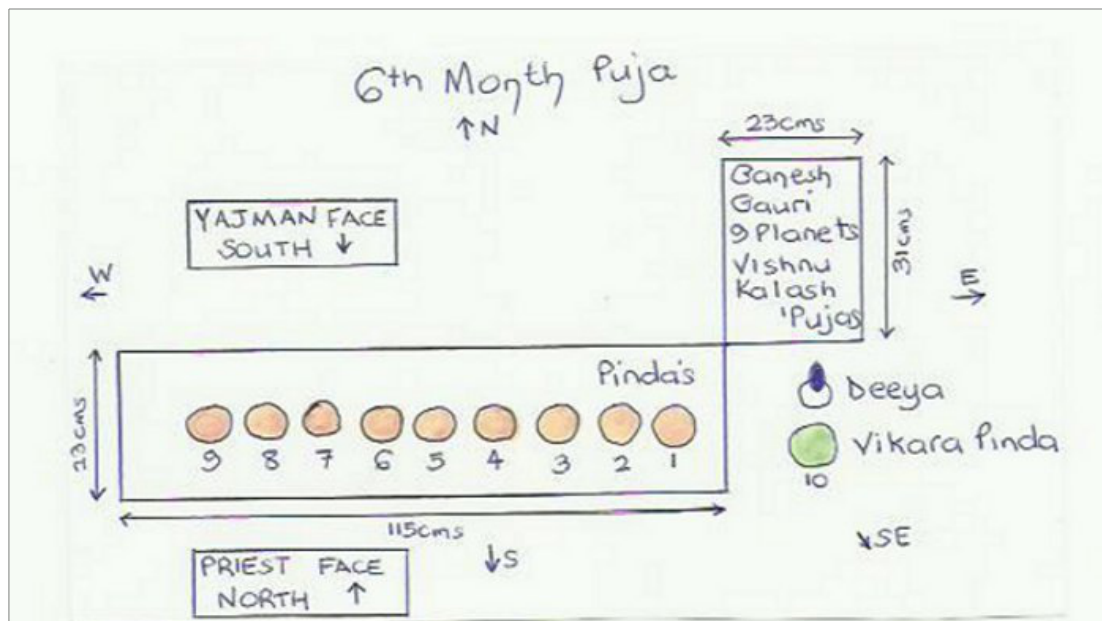
(Garuda Purana Preta Kanda Chapter 5 verses 48 to 54)



A Pinda

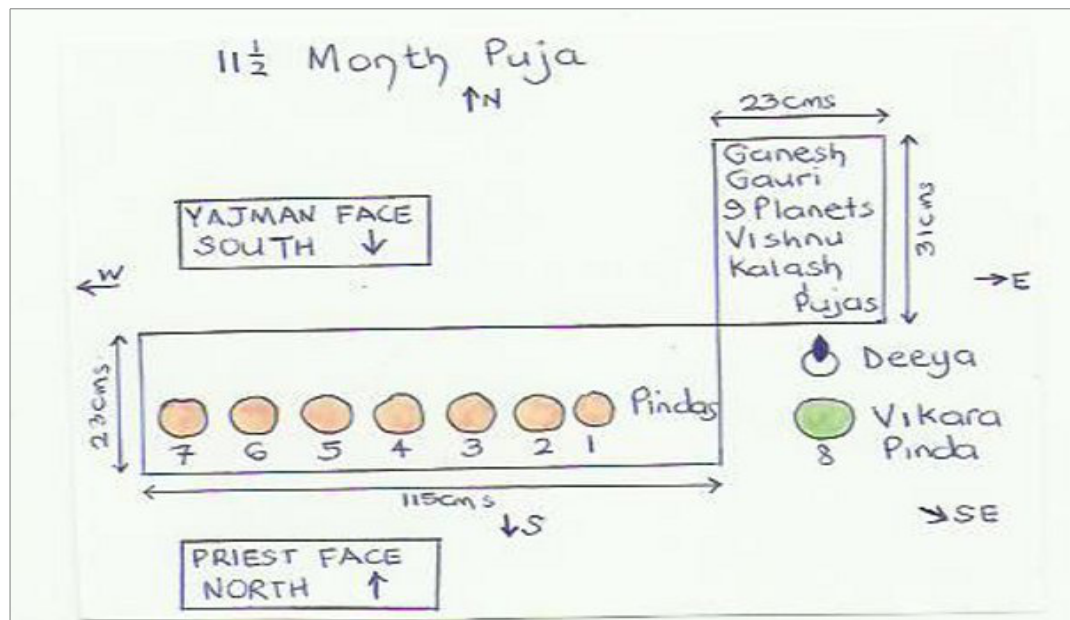
Thus the 16 pindas are offered during the course of 11 ½ months. Now due to many reasons like time, circumstances and financial constraints these prayers are performed just before the 6th months and the 11 ½ month as Shree Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu (who is the incarnation of Lord Krsna) instructed Srila Sanatana Gosvami and Srila Gopala Bhatta Goswami who compiled the book “Sat Kriya Sara Dipika” page 150 {“in the sixth and twelfth month the Shraddha rites should be conducted”}.

There’s a concern in the Indian community of South Africa as to when to perform the 6th month prayer. Now due to time, circumstances and financial constraints all the pindas that was to be offered to the deceased in the first six months (which are 9 in total) are offered in the sixth month prayer, and all the pindas from the 7th month to the 11 ½ month (which are 7 in total) are offered in the 11 ½ month prayer. This 9+7 adds up to 16 Pindas in total.



The Garuda Purana and the Sat Kriya Sara Dipika instructs to perform the sixth month ceremony. The reason why we offer 9 pindas in the sixth month as stated above is that the first three pindas in addition with the six pindas for the six months adds up to 9 pindas.

And the reason why we offer 7 pindas in the 11 ½ months ceremony as stated above is those 6 pindas (for the last 6 months) and the pinda on the 11 ¼ months makes seven (7) pindas to be offered in this ceremony.



Question:- How do we count days for the date of the prayers for the 6th and 11 ½ months

Answer:- The 6th Month Puja:- From the day of funeral you count 165 days. The prayers are generally performed due to time, circumstances, convenience and financial constraints on the nearest weekend. I would prefer it done on that day but we got to be practical as well.

The 11 ½ month Puja:- For example if the body was cremated on 31st July 2010. The one year for the deceased cremation day will be 31st July 2011. So now we just deduct two weeks from that date and we arrive at the date of 17th July 2011. This is rather simple to calculate.

Question:- If the 10th and 12/13th day prayer are so important, why then do we perform the 6th month and 11 ½ months ceremonies? What is the significance of these pujas?

Answer:- Lets first explain this by using an analogy. When one travels to Johannesburg from Durban doesn't one stop at the half way point (Montrose) to rest, eat something, fill petrol etc. So in the same way the food (the pindas) that we offer the soul is for the sustenance of the departed soul. This 6th month prayers is the half way point for the soul... The Soul has passed through 8 towns on the way to Yamaloka until now. The soul has to travel a further 8 more towns which takes a further 6 months. In total the trip takes 348 earth days.

Also when traveling from a long journey aren't you so hungry that you can practically eat anything. The soul travels 348 days after the 12/13th day prayer. Along the journey the departed soul gets hungry and thus this is food for the soul. The information below will reveal more on this matter.

Does the food really go to the deceased in whichever form?

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda 10. 2,4, 8-16, 20, 24-30

Garuda said: “But they eat different types of food. How can shraddha satiate them? The shraddha food is eaten by the brahmanas or given as oblations into the fire.”

Lord Vishnu said: “O Garuda, there is no restriction on a person if he becomes a deity or a man or an animal according to the actions of his previous life. If he becomes a deity, the shraddha food turns into nectar; an article of enjoyment if he becomes a gandharva; a grass if he becomes an animal; an air if he becomes a naaga; fruit in case of a bird; meat in case of a demon; blood in case of a ghost; grain in case of a man and an article of enjoyment in case of a child”.

Garuda said: “O Lord, how is the food offered to the ancestors given by men reach Pitrloka (where the ancestors live for a certain period of time) and who takes them there? How can a Shraddha gratify the dead and how does the deceased enjoy the fruits of the deeds such as the rites of obsequy performed by his son.”

The Lord replied: “The shruti declares that the food served to the brahmanas in the Shraddha turns into nectar, and so forth for the departed souls. By their names and gotras (family lineage) the ancestors receive the offerings made by the relatives. The mantras carry the same when they are recited with devotion and faith. How the articles reach the ancestors should not be doubted, O Garuda.” “When food is offered to the departed souls in the appropriate manner, at the appropriate time and place, as prescribed in the sastras, they carry the same to the ancestors in their path. Even though they assume different species and reach different worlds, with different names and gotras, they receive the offerings made in their favour by their kins.”

“Just as when a cow is lost in the herd of cattle, the calf searches for her and ultimately finds her, so the shraddha food searches the deceased person, though he has assumed a different form”.

“The ancestors feel elated at the approach of Shraddha time. Thus thinking in their mind they reach the shraddha place. They eat with the brahmanas. Whoever be the brahmanas invited for the feast, they enter his body, eat and return to their abode. If the performer of the Shraddha has invited a single Brahmana for the shraddha, the father stays in his stomach, the grandfather on his left side, the great-grandfather on the right and the consumer of the pinda at the back. During the period of the shraddha Lord Yamaraja releases even the ghosts and the ancestors staying in hell who being hungry run to the world of mortals to receive the offering made by their relatives. They repent for their misdeeds while they desire to be served with the milk-rice mixed with honey by their sons and grandsons. Therefore, the descendents should gratify them with the milk-rice.”

Question:- Why is there an abode called Pitrloka if souls are supposed to be transmigrated to another body after death?)

Answer:- Pitr-Loka is a heavenly planet within the lower hellish planets. And not all souls goes to Pitr-Loka. You got to perform lots of Punya-Karma (good meritorious deeds) to reside there. Lord Vishnu said: “Thereafter the deceased sojourns in the Pitrloka together with the ancestors. Hence, the Sapinda should be performed by the son to his father.” (Pitrloka is the world of the ancestors where the spirits of the dead abide for sometime before they enter the heaven or descend to the world of mortals. The spirit of the deceased person is entitled to the designation of Pitr, and an abode in Pitrloka after passing through the state of Preta as a result of the sapindikarana rite which absolves him of pretahood.) Garuda Purana Preta Khanda 26.7

“The inhabitants of Pitrloka are generally people of the karma kandiya or fruitive activities category, who have been transferred there because of their pious activities. They can stay there as long as their descendants offer them Vishnu prasada.”
Srimad Bhagavatam 5.2.2 purport

Question:- People say one must pray to deceased parents/family members for guidance because they will guide you but if these people are reincarnated/transmigrated into another body after death - how do they remember you because they have no memory of previous birth or family relations?

Answer:- Some of your ancestors still remain behind guiding/helping you along the way. Many don't pass over due to attachment. This world is full of spirits because most of the deceased' prayers were not performed or not performed properly.

*** Do note once the 1 year ceremony is completed it's forbidden to perform any individual rites for the deceased again. The deceased becomes, if all the pujas were performed correctly, a Pitr and when Pitr Paksha arrives he will receive his due... Lord Vishnu in the Garuda Purana strictly forbids any individual rites for a person after the 1 year ceremony. Garuda Purana Preta Khanda 26.32 “After sapinda, all individual shraddhas are avoided and forbidden. He who gives separate pindas virtually kills the pitrs”

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The hellish planets

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