

Can one perform prayers during the one year after a person die?

This is a very popular question amongst Hindu's. But before I answer this Question let me ask you a question. If you perform a prayer and that prayer stops you from praying for a year then there is something very wrong with that prayer you just performed, don't you think???

So this should answer your Question. Many are under the belief that because the deceased is still travelling for a year that out of respect they don't perform any prayers. This can't be further from the truth. After 12/13th days puja you can perform any prayers you like. Life carries on and should not stop after a person dies. Actually the more prayers you perform the better for the deceased.

But let's just rewind a bit and see what our shastras the Garuda Purana say. In the previous ages the sapindi-daan was performed on 1 year after death. Now the thing with the sapindi puja is that until this prayer is performed you cannot do practically anything. You are stuck basically at home. You cannot go to prayers, weddings, you yourself cannot perform any prayers at home etc. But Lord Vishnu knew that this will happen in Kali Yuga so the Lord made provisions for this age of Kali and thus the Lord said that the Sapindi Puja must be performed on the 12/13th day. Thus after this prayers is performed, normal pujas are commenced. So you can read from the above that maybe this is where the whole story that you cannot do anything for a whole year stems from.

Sometimes I do feel that this is an excuse not to perform any prayers for a year. If this is the case then they must not have any salt food for the year, they must not eat meat for the year and not do anything in that one year... now this changes everything doesn't it. Try to tell a Hindu stay away from meat for a year and that will cause such a raucous.

I performed a havan for a family who didn't perform any puja at their house for over 8 years. They were in dire poverty. Why? Because they just stopped all pujas as they was advised not to perform any prayers for a full year because of the death in the family. That's what most Hindu's follow and this is sooooo incorrect as when a person dies one should be performing more prayers than usual. This will be beneficial for the deceased. Now what if a another person in the family dies in the 11th month then you are going to wait for another year. my word this gets rather ridiculous that people in this day in age still are following all these fear based traditions. So please do continue with your pujas as normal as this is beneficial for the deceased.

Here are some verses from the Garuda Purana.

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 5 verse 12 "In death impurity last for 10 days, O bird."

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 5

Verses 81-82 "Lord Vishnu said, O Garuda, I shall now tell you how people go to Yama's abode. On the 12/13th day, after Shravana-Karma (Sapindi rites), he is captured by Yama's attendants."

Verse 83 “The body attains a form like air. Born out of Pinda it assumes a shape different from the one born from the womb of the mother.”

Verses 84-85 “88,000 yojanas long is the distance between the mortals and Yama’s worlds. 200, 5 he covers daily. So in 348 days he reaches Yama’s city”

Verse 140 “At the end of the year he eats the annual Shraddha offered by his relatives.”

Verses 150-154 “Those who have given umbrella, shoes and shelter see Lord Yama as gentle-faced with earrings and with a shining chest. In the shraddha of the 11th and 12th month many brahmanas should be feasted because then the deceased is very hungry. He, who does not perform the needful while alive, suffers afterwards.”

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