

Tarpana for Devas, Rishis and Pitris

Super-short Procedure

By P.V.R. Narasimha Rao (www.VedicAstrologer.org)

Date of current version: 2008 August 11

Introduction

External rituals are meant to create the internal visualization needed to affect desirable internal changes in the long run. For example, one offers a full coconut into fire as poornaahuti (complete offering) at the end of a homam (fire ritual). This is symbolic of surrendering one's head or ego (sense of I-ness) to god and burning it in the fire of wisdom and becoming free from ego. As one keeps engaging in this act again and again, the visualization becomes stronger and stronger and ego is slowly reduced.

One important ritual of Hinduism is tarpana. Tarpana means "satisfying" or "satiating". One acknowledges the debt one has to devas (gods), rishis (sages) and pitris (ancestral manes) and tries to satisfy them using this ritual. Just as gods are invoked in fire in a homam, pitris are invoked in water in this ritual, then held in the palm and released in a specific way conducive to freeing them.

One owes a lot to one's parents and ancestors. In modern scientific terms, one owes all of one's genetic characteristics to one's parents and ancestors. Each ancestor is actually present in the person as a genetic characteristic. In karmik terms, one inherits some karmas of one's parents and ancestors and each ancestor is actually present in the person as a kaarmik predisposition. The latter approach obviously extends to multiple lives and some karmik predisposition is inherited from the ancestors from a past life too, though they may not be related to one in this life.

By thinking of the deceased ancestors with gratitude and trying to give them an emancipation, one is actually trying to free oneself from various kaarmic predispositions that one has as a result of the rina (karmik debt) with several people. One can view this as an external event of satisfying and emancipating an external entity (a pitri). Alternately, one can view this as an internal event of satisfying and releasing an internal kaarmik predisposition. Ultimately, it is the latter. However, one needs to externalize first and perform external rituals, while thinking of what it means internally. This builds up one's visualization and slowly brings about internal changes and eventually the desired internal change itself. One with living parents also can perform pitri tarpanas for departed ancestors of this life and previous lives.

Two external spiritual sadhanas are particularly powerful, useful and recommended for every person desirous of fast spiritual progress:

- (1) Homam (fire ritual): Gods are invoked in fire and satisfied with offerings with mantras. Please see the homam website at <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/homam> for more. In the long run, a regular practice of this ritual increases the subtle fire burning inside one's subtle body, burns various impediments to spiritual progress and gives clarity, focus and stability to the mind.
- (2) Tarpana (water ritual): Gods, sages and manes are invoked in water and satisfied with emancipation given to them. In the long run, a regular practice of this ritual increases the release of various kaarmik predispositions and weaknesses that are blocking one's spiritual and material progress.

This document describes the procedure of pitri tarpana with the relevant mantras using a simple approach. This document is the **super-short procedure**. There are also documents giving a **regular procedure** and a **short procedure** for those with less time constraints. Download them from <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/tarpana>.

When to Perform Tarpana

Tarpana can be performed on any day. In fact, it can be performed everyday also. If that is not possible, one can consider performing it every week or every fortnight or at least every month. One can perform this anywhere, but *ideally* not in the living area of one's house where people may sleep. It is fine to do it the front yard or back yard or balcony or terrace of one's house. Amavasya (new Moon) day or eclipse day or a Vyatipata yoga day and sankranthi (solar ingress) day or pitri paksha are very good times for performing tarpana. At those times, tarpana can be performed inside one's house also.

There are some restrictions. Tarpana with water containing sesame seeds (which is needed for pitris) should *not* be performed:

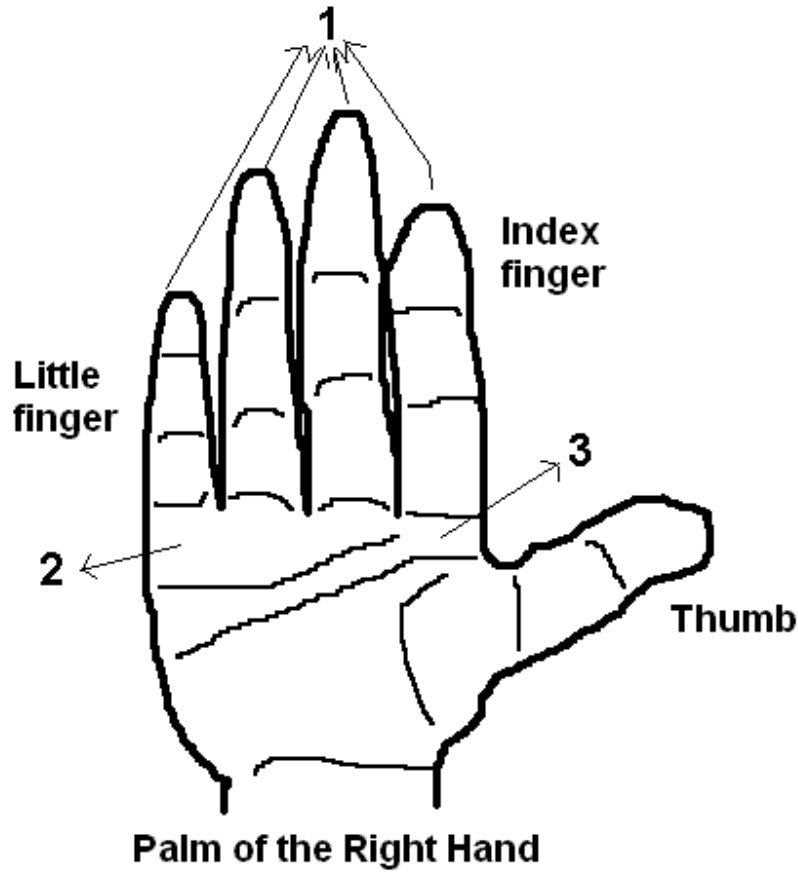
- (1) on a Sunday that has saptami tithi (7th day of the lunar fortnight),
- (2) on a Friday that has a nanda tithi (1st, 6th and 11th tithis of the lunar fortnights),
- (3) on a Sunday with Moon in Bharani, Krittika or Magha nakshatra, and,
- (4) on one's birthday.

On these days, tarpanas not requiring water with sesame seed can be performed, but not the ones requiring water with sesame seeds.

Materials Needed

One needs the following materials:

- (1) Water pot made ideally of gold, silver, copper, bronze, brass or panchalohas (five metals). It should ideally not be made of iron, steel or clay. However, it is better to make compromises when you have no suitable pot, than skipping the ritual altogether.
- (2) Some *akshatas* made by mixing uncooked plain white (or brown) rice grains with turmeric powder and a drop of ghee (clarified butter) or an oil. In the absence of turmeric powder, just plain rice grains can be used as akshatas. In the absence of rice grains, use a grain that is locally popular and available.
- (3) Black sesame seeds. Try your best to get them. If you cannot get them, use white or brown sesame seeds as a substitute. If you cannot get any of them, use akshatas (see (2) above) instead of sesame seeds.
- (4) Darbhas or kushas, a sacred grass. Each darbha has a sharp edge and a base. You need to hold three of them in your right palm, while holding and leaving water. If you do not have darbha, use a locally available grass. If that cannot be done, just ignore darbhas in all directions and proceed without them.
- (5) A ring made of darbha, known as pavitram, is to be worn on the right hand ring finger during the ritual. If that is not available, it is acceptable to wear any ring made of any gemstone or gold or silver. So wear some ring on the right hand ring finger. If that is not possible, proceed without it.



Sankalpam (vow)

While sitting cross-legged, the empty left-hand palm is placed on the right knee with the palm facing up. Some akshatas are taken in the right hand, it is closed and the closed fist of the right hand is placed on the left palm with the palm of the closed right fist facing down (towards the left hand palm). The following is recited to take a sankalpa (vow) to perform this ritual. It means “on this auspicious day and auspicious time, I shall perform tarpana to Devas, Rishis and Pitris to the best of my ability”. After reciting it, the akshatas are dropped on the ground in front of one.

om adya śubha dine śubha muhūrte devarṣipitṛprītyartham devarṣipitṛtarpaṇam yathāśakti kariṣye|

Deva Tarpana

The first to be performed is Deva Tarpana, satiation of various gods who run this universe. They are also microcosmically present in each person as various good qualities inside that person. Place the water pot in front of you. Sit facing the **east** direction. The right knee should be in contact with the ground, while the left knee should be out of contact with the ground (*i.e.* place the left leg over right leg so that left knee is a little above the ground). Put some akshatas in the water pot, hold the water pot on the right hand palm, cover it with the left hand palm and say the following to request the presence of gods, rishis *etc* in that water pot. It means “may Brahma *etc* gods and Kashyapa *etc* sages, may all the great ones who live in the stomach of the cosmic egg of creation come here”.

brahmādayaḥ surāḥ sarve ṛṣayaḥ kaśyapādayaḥ| āgacchantu mahābhāgā brahmāṇḍodaravartinaḥ||

Now say the following mantras once each. Pour some water with the left hand into the open right palm. You can pour directly from the pot or use a spoon to pour. Once water is poured into the right palm, say one mantra and release the water. The water should be released such that it falls out of the right hand palm from the tips of the four fingers, *i.e.* from the area marked as “1” in the picture. If you have 3 darbhas, place them on the right hand palm with the tips of the darbhas aligned with the tips of fingers. You may insert them in a ring or something to force them to stay on the palm and not move off. If you do not have darbhas, do not worry.

If you are performing this in a river, you can stand in the river, make a bowl (an anjali) with both the palms joined together, take water in that bowl, raise the hands as high as you can, say the mantra and then drop the water via the tips of the fingers of both hands.

om brahmā ṛpyatām| om viṣṇuḥ ṛpyatām| om rudraḥ ṛpyatām| om prajāpatiḥ ṛpyatām|
om devāḥ ṛpyantām| om devyaḥ ṛpyantām| om vasavaḥ ṛpyantām| om rudrāḥ ṛpyantām| om ādityāḥ
ṛpyantām| om chandāmsi ṛpyantām| om vedāḥ ṛpyantām| om ṛṣayaḥ ṛpyantām| om gandharvāḥ
ṛpyantām| om apsarasaḥ ṛpyantām| om devānugāḥ ṛpyantām| om nāgāḥ ṛpyantām| om sāgarāḥ
ṛpyantām| om parvatāḥ ṛpyantām| om saritaḥ ṛpyantām| om manuṣyāḥ ṛpyantām| om yakṣāḥ ṛpyantām|
om rakṣāmsi ṛpyantām| om piśācāḥ ṛpyantām| om suparṇāḥ ṛpyantām| om bhūtāni ṛpyantām| om
paśavaḥ ṛpyantām| om vanaspatayaḥ ṛpyantām| om ośadhayaḥ ṛpyantām|

Rishi Tarpana

You need to continue to sit facing east with the right knee in contact with earth. You need to use the water containing akshatas and do the same way as in Deva tarpana. Use the following mantras.

om kaśyapaḥ ṛpyatām| om atriḥ ṛpyatām| om vasiṣṭhaḥ ṛpyatām| om viśvāmitraḥ ṛpyatām| om gautamaḥ
ṛpyatām| om bharadvājaḥ ṛpyatām| om jamadagniḥ ṛpyatām| om aṅgīrāḥ ṛpyatām| om kutsaḥ ṛpyatām|
om bhṛguḥ ṛpyatām|

Some changes before the next sections

Sit facing the **south** direction. If you are wearing the sacred thread, wear it in reverse. In other words, wear it now **above** the shoulder on the **right** and **below** the shoulder (*i.e.* at the hip level) on the **left**. Change its position **without removing it** from the body. The left knee should be in contact with the ground, while the right knee should be above the ground and not touching it. So sit with the left leg on the ground and the right leg on top of left leg. Pour some **black sesame seeds** in the water pot.

The style of releasing water from now onwards: Take some water, hold it in the right palm, say each mantra and release it sideways from the area below the base of the **index finger**, *i.e.* from the area marked as “3” in the picture. Three offerings are made with each mantra now. If you have 3 darbhas in your hand, place them on the index finger, with the tips of darbhas aligned with the tip of the index finger. Water should be touching the base of darbhas as it leaves the palm. If you do not have darbhas, do not worry.

Pitri Tarpana

These are offerings to various deceased ancestors of various lives. First place the water pot in front of you, bow to it and say the following. This means “may my ancestors come here and accept my water oblations”.

om āgacchantu me pitarāḥ imaṁ grhṇantu jalāñjalim|

Use the following mantras and release water 3 times or one time with each mantra on encountering numbers, in the style previously mentioned. Please note that 3 offerings are made to 3 generations of maternal and paternal ancestors, while only one offering is made to other people.

These are generic mantras to cover all people who have a strong kaarmik connection to you, either **in this life or the ones before**. These mantras are applicable to all, **irrespective of whether any of one's parents and other relations are alive or not**. Some specific customizable mantras giving the names of a specific deceased relatives you want to cover will be given at the end.

To beings who played the role of father in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu pitarāḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1|| tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||2|| tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||3||

To beings who played the role of father's father in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu pitāmahāḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1|| tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||2|| tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||3||

To beings who played the role of father's father's father in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu prapitāmahāḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1|| tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||2|| tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||3||

To beings who played the role of mother in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu mātaraḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1|| tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||2|| tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||3||

To beings who played the role of father's mother in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu pitāmahyaḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1|| tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||2|| tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||3||

To beings who played the role of father's father's mother in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu prapitāmahyaḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1|| tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||2|| tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||3||

To beings who played the role of wife in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu patnyaḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1||

To beings who played the role of husband in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu patayaḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1||

To beings who played the role of son in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu putrāḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1||

To beings who played the role of daughter in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu kanyāḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tābhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1||

To beings who played the role of a dear one in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu āptajanāḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1||

To beings who played the role of one born in the same lineage in various lives to you:

mama sarvajanmeṣu svakulajātāḥ ṛpyantām idaṁ tilodakaṁ svadhāyibhyaḥ tebhyaḥ svadhā namaḥ ||1||

Customization for Specific Deceased Persons

The exhaustive list above covers various people who were close to us in various lives and left a kaarmik imprint on our soul and resulted in some kaarmik predispositions in this life.

Now, if you want to offer tarpana to a specific deceased person, use the following customization. Based on whether the deceased is a man or woman, pick the correct mantra from below. Substitute the gotra, relation and name in the mantra to get a customized mantra.

If the deceased person is a **man** from List A:

Gotra gotraḥ mama Relation Name tṛpyatām idaṁ tilodakam tasmai svadhā namaḥ ||1|| tasmai svadhā namaḥ ||2|| tasmai svadhā namaḥ ||3||

If the deceased person is a **woman** from List A:

Gotra gotrā mama Relation Name tṛpyatām idaṁ tilodakam tasyai svadhā namaḥ ||1|| tasyai svadhā namaḥ ||2|| tasyai svadhā namaḥ ||3||

If the deceased person is a **man** from List B:

Gotra gotraḥ mama Relation Name tṛpyatām idaṁ tilodakam tasmai svadhā namaḥ ||1||

If the deceased person is a **woman** from List B:

Gotra gotrā mama Relation Name tṛpyatām idaṁ tilodakam tasyai svadhā namaḥ ||1||

In all the cases, the word “Gotra” in the mantras is to be replaced by the gotra name of the deceased person (e.g. Vasishtha, Gautama, Angirasa, Bharadwaja, Kaushika, Atri *etc*). Gotra of a person traces to the Rishi (sage) from whom the family line originated. If the gotra is not known, one can use Achyuta (acyuta) for those who prefer Vishnu and Shiva (śiva) for those who prefer Shiva, as the default gotra. The word “Name” in the mantras is to be replaced by the actual name of the deceased person. The word “Relation” in the mantras is to be replaced by the Sanskrit word describing the relationship of the deceased person to you. Get it from the following tables. Please note that tarpana can be offered to several specific people. In that case, repeat the above mantra by inserting the gotra, name and relationship corresponding to each.

Get the Sanskrit words for relationship from the table below.

List A (paternal/maternal ancestors):

Father: pitā. Mother: mātā. Father’s father: pitāmahaḥ. Father’s mother: pitāmahī.

Father’s father’s father: prapitāmahaḥ. Father’s father’s mother: prapitāmahī.

Mother’s father: mātāmahaḥ. Mother mother: mātāmahī.

Mother’s father’s father: pramātāmahaḥ. Mother’s father’s mother: pramātāmahī.

Mother’s father’s father’s father: vṛddhapramātāmahaḥ.

Mother’s father’s father’s mother: vṛddhapramātāmahī.

List B (others):

Wife: patnī. Husband: patiḥ. Son: putraḥ. Daughter: kanyā.

Daughter-in-law: putrapatnī. Son’s son: pautraḥ. Son’s daughter: pautrī.

Son-in-law: jāmātā. Daughter’s son: dauhitraḥ. Daughter’s daughter: dauhitrī.

Brother: bhrātā. Sister: bhaginī.

Step-mother: sāpatnamātā. Step-father: sāpatnapitā.

Step-brother: sāpatnabhrātā. Step-sister: sāpatnabhaginī.

Father’s brother: pitṛvyaḥ. Mother’s brother: mātulaḥ.

Father’s sister: pitṛbhaginī. Mother’s sister: mātṛbhaginī.

Father-in-law: śvaśuraḥ. Mother-in-law: śvaśurapatnī.

Male teacher: guruḥ. Male teacher’s wife: gurupatnī.

Female teacher: gurvī. Female teacher’s husband: gurvīpatiḥ.

Disciple: śiṣyaḥ. Friend: sakhā.

A dear one: āptajānaḥ. One born in the same lineage: svakulajātaḥ.

Conclusion

Now throw away the remaining water in the pot. Put back the **sacred thread** in the **normal** way (see previous sections for the description). Sit facing the **east**. Say the following and think that you have surrendered the doership of the just finished action to the Lord. Now you should try to completely abandon the thought that “you” did it.

anena yathāsaktikṛtena devarṣipitr tarpaṇākhyena karmaṇā bhagavān pitrsvarūpī janārdana vāsudevaḥ
prīyatām na mama| om tat sat| om sarvam śrī kṛṣṇārpaṇamastu| om lokāḥ samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu| om
sarve janāḥ sukhino bhavantu| om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ|