

Tarpana for Devas, Rishis and Pitris

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 Sanatana Dharma (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 kaarmic 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 **short procedure**. There are also documents giving a **regular procedure** for those with more time and a **super-short procedure** for the benefit of those with 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:

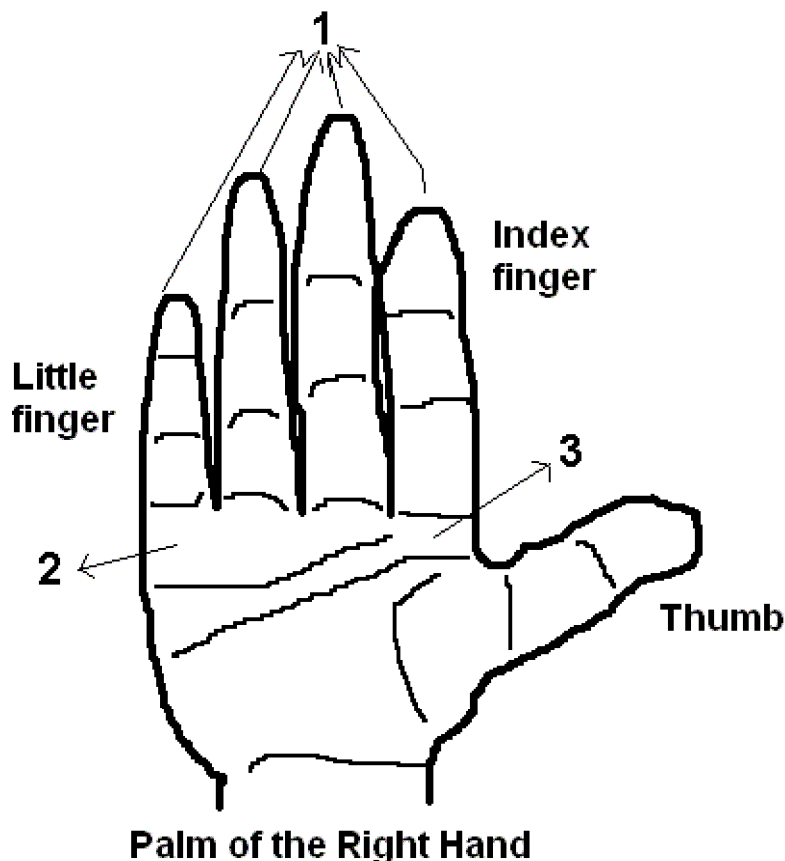
- (1) on a Sunday that has saptami tithi (7th day of the lunar fortnight),
- (2) on a Friday that has a nanda tithi (1st, 6th and 11th tithis of the lunar fortnights),
- (3) on a Sunday with Moon in Bharani, Krittika or Magha nakshatra, and,
- (4) on one's birthday.

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.

ഓം അദ്യ ശുഭ ദിനേ ശുഭ മുഹൂർത്തേ ദേവർഷിപിത്യപ്രീത്യർഥം ദേവർഷിപിത്യതർപ്പണമ്
യഥാശക്തി കരിഷ്യേ |

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”.

ബ്രഹ്മാദയഃ സൂരാഃ സരോഃ ഋഷയഃ കശ്യപാദയഃ | ആഗച്ഛന്തു മഹാഭാഗാ ബ്രഹ്മാഽഹോദരവർതിനഃ
||

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.

ഓം ബ്രഹ്മാ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം വിഷ്ണുഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം രുദ്രഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം പ്രജാപതിഃ
തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം ദേവാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം ദേവ്യഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം വസവഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം
രുദ്രാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം ആദിത്യഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം ഛന്ദാംസി തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം വേദാഃ
തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം ഋഷയഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം ഗന്ധര്വാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം അസ്തരസഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് |
ഓം ദേവാനുഗാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം നാഗാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം സാഗരാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം പരന്താഃ
തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം സരീതഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം മനുഷ്യാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം യക്ഷാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് |
ഓം രക്ഷാസി തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം പിശാചാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം സുപർണാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം
ഭൃതാനി തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം പശവഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം വനസ്സതയഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് | ഓം ഓഷധയഃ
തൃപ്യന്താമ് |

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.

ഓം കശ്യപഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം അത്രിഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം വസിഷ്ഠഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം വിശ്വാമിത്രഃ
തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം ഗൗതമഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം ഭരദവാജഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം ജമദഗ്നിഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം
അംഗിരാഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം കൃത്സഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് | ഓം ഭൃഗുഃ തൃപ്യതാമ് |

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.

Yama Tarpana

These are offerings to Lord Yama, who is the keeper of dharma and judge of people's karmas. Release water (in the style previously mentioned) whenever you encounter a namah.

ഓം യമായ നമഃ | ഓം യമായ നമഃ | ഓം യമായ നമഃ |
ഓം ധർമ്മരാജായ നമഃ | ഓം ധർമ്മരാജായ നമഃ | ഓം ധർമ്മരാജായ നമഃ |
ഓം മൃത്യുവേ നമഃ | ഓം മൃത്യുവേ നമഃ | ഓം മൃത്യുവേ നമഃ |
ഓം ചിത്രഗുപ്തായ നമഃ | ഓം ചിത്രഗുപ്തായ നമഃ | ഓം ചിത്രഗുപ്തായ നമഃ |

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”.

ഓം ആഗച്ഛന്തു മേ പിതരഃ ഇമം ഗൃഹ്ണന്തു ജലാംജലിമ് |

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.**

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

മമ സരാജന്മേഷു പിതരഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം സ്വധായിഭ്യഃ തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൧|| തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൨|| തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൩||

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

മമ സരാജന്മേഷു പിതാമഹാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം സ്വധായിഭ്യഃ തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൧|| തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൨|| തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൩||

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

മമ സരാജന്മേഷു പ്രപിതാമഹാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം സ്വധായിഭ്യഃ തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൧|| തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൨|| തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൩||

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

മമ സരാജന്മേഷു മാതരഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം സ്വധായിഭ്യഃ താഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൧|| താഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൨|| താഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൩||

To beings who played the role of **guru (teacher)** in various lives to you:
മമ സരാജന്മേഷു ഗുരവഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം സ്വധായിഭ്യഃ തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൧||

To beings who played the role of **friend** in various lives to you:
മമ സരാജന്മേഷു സഖാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം സ്വധായിഭ്യഃ തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൧||

To beings who played the role of a **dear one** in various lives to you:
മമ സരാജന്മേഷു ആപ്തജനാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം സ്വധായിഭ്യഃ തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൧||

To beings who played the role of **one born in the same lineage** in various lives to you:
മമ സരാജന്മേഷു സാകുലജാതാഃ തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം സ്വധായിഭ്യഃ തേഭ്യഃ സ്വധാ നമഃ ||൧||

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 ഗോത്രം മമ Relation Name തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം തസ്മൈ സ്വധാ നമഃ||൧|| തസ്മൈ സ്വധാ നമഃ||൧|| തസ്മൈ സ്വധാ നമഃ||൧||

If the deceased person is a **woman** from List A:
Gotra ഗോത്രം മമ Relation Name തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം തസ്മൈ സ്വധാ നമഃ||൧|| തസ്മൈ സ്വധാ നമഃ||൧|| തസ്മൈ സ്വധാ നമഃ||൧||

If the deceased person is a **man** from List B:
Gotra ഗോത്രം മമ Relation Name തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം തസ്മൈ സ്വധാ നമഃ||൧||

If the deceased person is a **woman** from List B:
Gotra ഗോത്രം മമ Relation Name തൃപ്യന്താമ് ഇദം തിലോദകം തസ്മൈ സ്വധാ നമഃ||൧||

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 (അച്യുത) for those who prefer Vishnu and Shiva (ശിവ) 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: പിതാ Mother: മാതാ
- Father's father: പിതാമഹഃ Father's mother: പിതാമഹി
- Father's father's father: പ്രപിതാമഹഃ Father's father's mother: പ്രപിതാമഹി
- Mother's father: മാതാമഹഃ Mother's mother: മാതാമഹി
- Mother's father's father: പ്രമാതാമഹഃ Mother's father's mother: പ്രമാതാമഹി
- Mother's father's father's father: വ്യഭാപ്രമാതാമഹഃ
- Mother's father's father's mother: വ്യഭാപ്രമാതാമഹി

List B (others):

Wife: പത്നീ Husband: പതിഃ Son: പുത്രഃ Daughter: കന്യാ
Daughter-in-law: പുത്രപത്നീ Son's son: പൗത്രഃ Son's daughter: പൗത്രി
Son-in-law: ജാമാതാ Daughter's son: ദൗഹിത്രഃ Daughter's daughter: ദൗഹിത്രി
Brother: ഭ്രാതാ Sister: ഭഗിനീ
Step-mother: സാപതമാതാ Step-father: സാപതപിതാ
Step-brother: സാപതഭ്രാതാ Step-sister: സാപതഭഗിനീ
Father's brother: പിതൃവ്യഃ Mother's brother: മാതൃലഃ
Father's sister: പിതൃഭഗിനീ Mother's sister: മാതൃഭഗിനീ
Father-in-law: ശ്വശൂരഃ Mother-in-law: ശ്വശൂരപത്നീ
Male teacher: ഗുരുഃ Male teacher's wife: ഗുരുപത്നീ
Female teacher: ഗുരവീ Female teacher's husband: ഗുരവീപതിഃ
Disciple: ശിഷ്യഃ Friend: സഖാ
A dear one: ആപ്തജനഃ One born in the same lineage: സ്വകുലജാതഃ

Conclusion

While releasing water continuously in the style previously mentioned, recite the following verses.

നരകേഷു സമസ്തേഷു യാതനാസു ച യേ സ്ഥിതാഃ | തേഷാം ആപ്യായനായൈതത് ഹൃദയതേ
സലിലമ് മയാ ||

യേ ബാഝവാ ബാഝവാശ്ച യേനൃജന്മനി ബാഝവാഃ | തേ തൃപ്തിമഖിലാ യാന്തു
യശ്ചാസ്മത്തോദിവാഝരതി ||

Now throw away the remaining water in the pot, clean it and take fresh water in it. Put back the sacred thread in the normal way (see previous sections for the description). Sit facing the east. While saying the following, offer fresh **water through the region marked as "1"** in the picture (tips of fingers) to gods, like in Deva tarpana described earlier

ഓം സൂര്യായ നമഃ | ഓം ബ്രഹ്മണേ നമഃ | ഓം അഗ്നയേ നമഃ | ഓം പൃഥിവ്യൈ നമഃ | ഓം
വരുണായ നമഃ | ഓം വിഷ്ണവേ നമഃ |

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.

അനേന യഥാശക്തികൃതേന ദേവർഷിപിത്യ തർപണാഖ്യേന കർമ്മണാ ഭഗവാൻ പിത്യസ്മാരുപീ
ജനാർദ്ദന വാസുദേവഃ പ്രിയതാം ന മമ | ഓം തത് സത് | ഓം സരാം ശ്രീ കൃഷ്ണാർപണമസ്തു | ഓം
ലോകാഃ സമസ്താഃ സുഖിനോ ഭവന്തു | ഓം സരോ ജനാഃ സുഖിനോ ഭവന്തു | ഓം ശാന്തിഃ
ശാന്തിഃ ശാന്തിഃ |