

Prayers with mantras to welcome one's Pitars on the first day of Pitar Paksha.

How to set up an Ancestor Altar (with photos).



From the Ancestor altar photo provided above, we have incorporated the **five** elements into the Ancestor altar. You must face south so the Altar faces you.

From the top left in a clockwise direction is the clay (**earth**) lamp (**fire**) with Til (sesame) oil and black Til seeds in the Til oil, the A4 collage of I.D sized ancestor photos with their names, a Bonzai tree (**earth**) to represent the family tree, Sage incense representing (**air**), (**ether**) the space above, (**water**) in a cup, food offerings (from mother **earth**) and finally crystals representing (**earth**).

The above set-up do not have to be the same, rather we are just suggesting the above so kindly set up your Ancestor altar as you see fit.

We used sage incenses above. The Sangomas in South Africa use Imphepho (sage, Helichrysum petiolare, liquorice plant) to smoke up the place and themselves to invite the Ancestors. Ancestors really like the smell of sage. The incense smell draws them to the place of offerings. We, as Hindus for thousands of years, do the same.

Prayers with mantras to welcome one's Pitars on the first day of Pitar Paksha.

What follows is from the Agastya Rishi's treatise on the Pitar Paksha rituals (Mahalaya Shraadhha Puja). Facing the east direction select a clean corner of your yard or balcony or room (if you don't have a yard or balcony). Sprinkle that area with Ganga Jal mixed with a pinch of Hurdi (turmeric) and rose water.

You will need: A mat/chattai to sit on; one glass/lota of water (Ganga Jal would be appropriate), a small bowl of BLACK sesame seeds (til); a thari/tray into which you will offer the water and the list of mantras from Agastya's Treatise provided below.

Mantras required: Pitar Gayatri mantra, Avaahanam mantra and Pitar mantra to end the prayers. The mantras are provided below. Provided below is the Mp4 if you can't pronounce the mantras and prefer listening to them as the prayers are performed.

The Pitar Gayatri mantra is chanted 11 times to activate all your Pitars from the Ether above so that their attention turns towards you. You may not know who your Pitars (ancestors) are; but when you begin to chant or hear Pitar-Gayatri, you will start radiating unique vibrations. These vibrations will be unique to you and will resonate through Ethers via your body, your mind, your sound and your intentions. Vibrations emitted by you will be like no one else; so Pitars whom you are intentionally reaching out to will immediately turn their attention to you. Either in the balcony of your house or a quiet corner of any room or yard, sit down facing East on a mat.

Before you begin chanting/hearing the Pitar-Gayatri, light the one or three sage incenses, and then light the Til oil lamp. It is important to state the following intention (mentally and in your thoughts and words) towards the Ethers:

"To all the ancestors from my father's side; to all the ancestors from my mother's side; to all the ancestors from my spouse's side...;

... to all the ancestors that are known to me; to all the ancestors that are unknown to me; to all the Pitars in the Ethers who may have no descendants...;

... to all the Pitars in the Ethers whose descendants may have forgotten them; to all the friends who have passed into the Ethers...;

... and to the souls of all animals who die feeding me and my family, directly or indirectly. Kindly turn your loving attention towards me:

Now chant or hear the Pitar Gayatri Mantra (11 times in succession):

"Om pitru ganaaya vidmahe
jagat dhaarineya dheemahi
tanno pitro prachodayaat"

or hear the MP4 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br_INO4DgZk)

If you are adept at visualization, you may see your Pitars a few feet above you, surrounding you in a semi-circle, facing you.

You have now caught your Pitars attention. The next step is to invite them to accept your humble offerings of black sesame seeds and water.



The Avaahanam (invocation/welcoming) mantra is now chanted three times:

Avaahanam Mantra: "Om aagach-hantu me pitru emam grihanti jalaan-jalim" or say the English translation below

Translation: "I humbly invite you all my Ancestors into my home to accept my offerings of black sesame seeds and water to quench your hunger and thirst".

Then you chant the Pitar mantra (three times in succession):

1. Take black sesame seeds in your right hand.
2. While chanting the Pitar mantra, pour water over sesame seeds into the plate while you face East.
3. Water has to flow from between the thumb and index finger and not from the front of palms flowing over fingers, as we normally do.
4. The water that will flow between the thumb and index finger will automatically flow towards the South direction.
5. The direction of Pitars (Pitar-loka - the planet of the Ancestors) is South.

Pitar mantra:

"Om sarva pitru devaaya namah.
Trip- tayaa-midam tilo-daham va jalaan-jalim
tasmai swaahaa namah, tasmai swaahaa namah"

If you're someone who enjoys having a verbal dialogue with those Ancestors gathered; then kindly do so.

Kindly request them to enjoy your food offerings to them and ask for forgiveness for any shortcomings on your path to please them.

Kindly remember that your Pitars will remain on the earthly plane for the duration of the fortnight (Paksha).

When offerings your water (tarpan) and food your offerings you may play these MP4's. It is of course optional.

Kindly click on the links and download them.

Pitru Stotra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OtSuXL9KDg>

Pitru Sukta (Mantra for Pitru Paksha) chanted by Priests of Kashi

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EY3p44R_KBE

Pitar Chalisa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tP89Z-allDk>

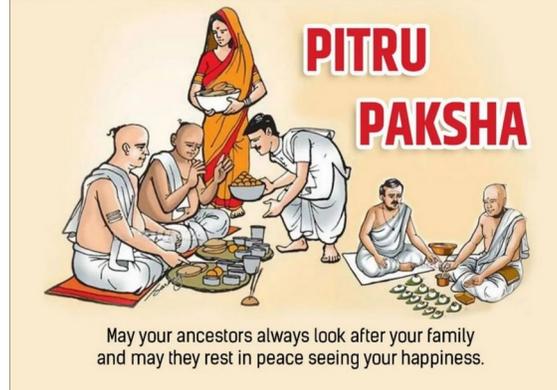
Pitar Aarti

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqpZhhUqkHU>

Why is black sesame seeds so important in Pitar worship: Using black sesame seeds in the *shraddha* (prayers relating to the death of a loved one) means invoking the deceased ancestors (*Pitars*) trapped in the *Martyaloka* (the planet/place of death - in other words, *Yamaloka*) with the help of the *raja-tama* (the mode of passion) frequencies emitted from the black sesame seeds. The recitation of *mantras* in the *shraddha* has an amazing effect on the black sesame seeds. The dormant *raja-tama* energy in black sesame seeds is awakened as a result of the sound energy generated by the recitation of the *mantras*. This energy is emitted into the environment in the spiral form of *raja-tama* vibrations. At that time, according to the invocation made in the *shraddha*, subtle bodies of particular *Pitars*

are attracted towards these vibrations and enter the Earth's environment. In this process, with the help of the *raja-tama* frequencies emitted from the black sesame seeds, reaching the place of the *shraddha* ritual becomes easier for the subtle bodies of *Pitars*. Black sesame seeds are showered at the place of the *shraddha* by the host. Due to the frequencies of *Pitars* getting attracted towards the black sesame seeds, the place of the *shraddha* becomes charged with the *Pitar* frequencies.

The donation of black sesame seeds is considered auspicious together with performing *Shraddha*.



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