

AMAVASYA TARPANAM

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◆For a period of more than four decades, [Sathguru Venkataraman](#) of the [Agasthiar](#) Siddha Guru Parampara Lineage stressed the importance of [nitya tharpanam](#) ([daily tarpanam](#)) offerings for one's [pitru ancestral beings](#). He said that nitya (daily) tharpana is as important as the other nitya (daily) pooja (worship) procedures.

◆However, people often gave excuses such as *"I don't know the procedure"* or *"I have to get a priest to do it for me but it is hard to find one"* or *"The procedure is too complex"* and so on.

◆To put an end to such excuses, Sathguru Venkataraman gave us Maha Guru Agasthiar's *Easy Tharpanam Method* from the *Neethaar Kadan Padalam - The Debt to Departed Ancestors* Section - of the Agasthiar Moola Naadi, the foundational work of Maha Guru Agasthiar's lineage ([tarpanam books](#)).

◆Using this simplified tarpanam procedure, you can do tarpanam by yourself, wherever you may be.

◆Sathguru Venkataraman published this easy tarpanam method in his books in the 1980s and 1990s and also in his [monthly magazine](#). We are pretty sure this was the first time that such a simple tharpanam method was published and all people were actively encouraged to do tarpanam without any restrictions whatsoever.

◆It is this easy tharpanam method that we are going to cover in this article. But please note that over and beyond this easy tharpanam method, Sathguru Venkataraman gave us hundreds of unique tharpanam procedures in 4 volumes of his ["Easy Tharpanam Methods"](#) series of books and also in numerous articles in his monthly magazine and in his Tamil blog. Refer to these sources for these special tharpanam procedures.

◆If you know the traditional way of doing tharpanam and the traditional mantras, or if you follow a certain family tradition, by all means follow your traditional practices. What we give here is Agasthiar's easy tarpanam method that anyone anywhere can follow. No restrictions whatsoever.

2 Part Tharpanam

◆ The easy tharpanam method is made up of 2 parts. The first part is what is known as Pitru Tharpanam and the second part is known as Karunya Tharpanam.

What is Pitru Tharpanam?

◆ **There are many spiritual debts that each one of us needs to pay every day. One of these is our daily debt to our ancestral beings known as *pitrus*. To pay off this debt, what we need to do daily is the worship procedure known as *pitru tharpanam*. This worship procedure is quite easy. You can do it in about 10 minutes or so.**

◆ *Pitru* = one's ancestors.

◆ *Tharpanam* = to satisfy, to please.

◆ So *pitru tharpanam* = pleasing one's ancestors.

◆ In the *pitru tharpanam* procedure, we offer tharpanam to 12 of our most recently departed ancestors. These are our departed ancestors in our parental lines, i.e., departed parents, grandparents, great grandparents and so on.

◆ Departed uncles, grand uncles, aunts, grand aunts and others not in the parental lines are not covered in the *pitru tharpanam* process. They are covered in the Karunya Tharpanam process described below.

◆ You can offer tharpanam for more than 12 of your departed ancestors, but that is more advanced and we don't cover that here in this easy tharpanam method.

What is Karunya Tharpanam?

◆ Karunya Tharpanam is the second part of the tharpanam process. It is tharpanam offered to departed relatives, friends, strangers, pets, animals, birds, insects, creatures, plants, trees and other departed beings.

Six things you need for doing Tharpanam

◆ 1. A mat to sit on, preferably made of sacred Darbha grass (also known as Kusa grass). A wooden plank or clean cloth made of natural fibers such as cotton or wool can also be used as a mat.

◆ 2. A clean plate made of wood, copper, brass or silver. Glass and stainless steel are not appropriate.

◆ 3. Clean water in a wood, copper, brass or silver cup that is convenient to hold in your left hand. You may also want to have water in a separate bowl. Glass and stainless steel are not appropriate.

◆ 4. Black sesame seeds (*ellu* in Tamil, *til* in Hindi). If you are male, use black sesame seeds. If you are female, use white sesame seeds. Why so? The answer is in Sathguru

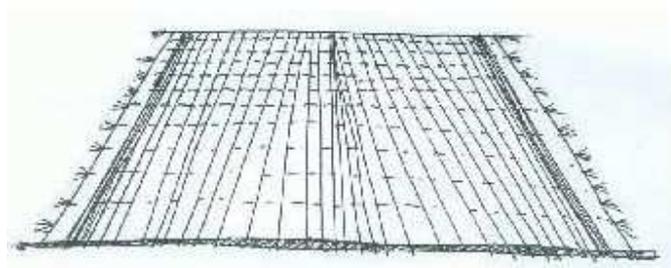
Venkataraman's Siddha writings.

- ◆5. Dharba grass (also known as kusa grass and as dharbai).
- ◆6. Pavitram made of darbha grass (see image on this page) to be worn on the ring finger of the right hand.

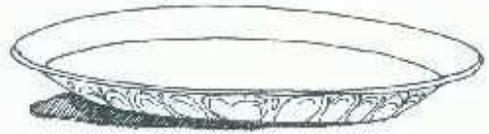
6 things you need for doing Tharpanam

Source: Sathguru Venkataraman's Siddha Writings
published in the 1980s and 1990s in his books and monthly magazine.

www.Agasthiar.Org



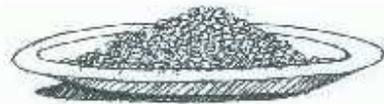
1. A mat to sit on. Preferably made of Darbha grass. A wooden plank or clean cloth made of natural fibers like cotton or wool can also be used as a seat.



2. A clean plate made of wood, copper or brass. Glass and stainless steel plates are not appropriate.



3. Water in a wooden or brass vessel that is convenient to hold in your left hand. Glass and stainless steel vessels are not appropriate.



4. Black sesame seeds (TIL in Hindi, ELLU in Tamil). Women should use white sesame seeds.



5. Darbha grass



6. Pavitram made of Darbha grass to be worn on the ring finger of the right hand.

www.Agasthiar.Org/a/tharpanam.htm

2 Lists You Need to Create

- ◆ Apart from the above, you also need to create two lists: (i) a list of (departed) beings for whom you will be doing the pitru tharpanam ceremony and (ii) a list of (departed) beings for whom you will be doing kaarunya tharpanam.
- ◆ You will also need the mantras for pitru and karunya tarpanam. All these are described

below.

Creating the List of 12 Most Recently Departed Ancestors

◆How do you list your 12 most recently departed ancestors? You list them 3 each from 4 ancestral lines as described below.

1. **Paternal male ancestors, i.e., the male ancestors on your father's side.** These are:

- F (father)
- FF (father's father)
- FFF (father's father's father)
- FFFF (father's father's father's father)
- FFFFF (father's father's father's father's father)
- and so on.

◆Pick the 3 most recently **departed** from this ancestral line and note down the names and the relationships. ◆For example, let us assume that the father(F) and father's father(FF) are alive. In this case, the three most recently departed ancestors in this line will be:

EXAMPLE: 3 Most Recently Departed Paternal male ancestors

Which	Relationship	Name (if known)
1.	FFF	Murugan
2.	FFFF	Siva
3.	FFFFF	-not known-

2. **Paternal female ancestors, i.e., the female ancestors on your father's side.** These are:

- M (mother)
- FM (father's mother)
- FFM (father's father's mother)
- FFFM (father's father's father's mother)
- FFFFFM (father's father's father's father's mother)
- and so on.

◆Pick the 3 most recently **departed** from this ancestral line and note down the names and the relationships. ◆For example, let us assume that the father's mother(FM) and father's father's father's mother(FFFM) are alive. In this case, the three most recently departed ancestors in this line will be:

EXAMPLE: 3 Most Recently Departed Paternal female ancestors

Which	Relationship	Name (if known)
4.	M	Saraswati
5.	FFM	Lakshmi
6.	FFFFM	-not known-

3. **Maternal male ancestors, i.e., the male ancestors on your mother's side.** These are:

- MF (mother's father)
- MFF (mother's father's father)
- MFFF (mother's father's father's father)
- MFFFF (mother's father's father's father's father)
- MFFFFFF (mother's father's father's father's father's father)
- and so on.

◆ Pick the 3 most recently **departed** from this ancestral line and note down the names and the relationships. ◆ For example, let us assume that the mother's father's father(MFF) is alive. In this case, the three most recently departed ancestors in this line will be:

EXAMPLE: 3 Most Recently Departed Maternal male ancestors		
Which	Relationship	Name (if known)
7.	MF	Kumar
8.	MFFF	Gopala
9.	MFFFF	Narayana

4. **Maternal female ancestors, i.e., the female ancestors on your mother's side.** These are:

- MM (mother's mother)
- MFM (mother's father's mother)
- MFFM (mother's father's father's mother)
- MFFFFM (mother's father's father's father's mother)
- MFFFFFFM (mother's father's father's father's father's mother)
- and so on.

◆ Pick the 3 most recently **departed** from this ancestral line and note down the names and the relationships. ◆ For example, let us assume that no one is alive in this ancestral line. In this case, the three most recently departed ancestors in this line will be:

EXAMPLE: 3 Most Recently Departed Maternal female ancestors		
Which	Relationship	Name (if known)
10.	MM	Valli
11.	MFM	Jyoti
12.	MFFM	Devi

Creating the List of (Departed) Beings for Kaarunya Tharpanam

◆ Having listed the 12 most recently departed ancestors, we should now list the departed souls for whom we should do karunya tharpanam, that is, departed friends, departed relatives (i.e., non-parental relatives), departed mentors and people you liked or respected, strangers, pets, animals, birds, insects, creatures, plants, trees, etc.

◆ Sathguru Venkataraman was emphatic that we should do karunya tharpanam for the grains, vegetables, fruits, herbs and other plant products that we have consumed. For those who consume (or have consumed) meat products, karunya tharpanam is that much more important and they must certainly do karunya tharpanam for the animals, birds and other creatures that they have consumed.

EXAMPLE List of (Departed) Beings for Kaarunya Tarpanam

(1. (Departed) Beings you have known or whose relationship to you is known)

Relationship	Name (if known)
Uncle	Ramesh
Best Friend in College	Suresh
Algebra Teacher	John Smith
Pet Dog	Lassie

(2. (Departed) Beings you did not know or who were not connected to you as a relative, friend, mentor, etc.)

- ◆ Kids who died in the Chennai Tsunami.
- ◆ People who died in 9/11 WTC.
- ◆ People who died in war.
- ◆ People who died in the accident I saw today.
- ◆ People who died in the earthquake yesterday.
- ◆ *All plants, trees, vegetables, grains, etc. that died for the sake of feeding me.*
- ◆ *(For those who consume meat) All animals, birds and other creatures that died for the sake of feeding me.*

The above **EXAMPLES** can help you create your own list for your Kaarunya Tarpanam.

Mantra to be used for Pitru Tharpanam

as given by Sathguru Venkataraman

◆ What we give below is the simplest mantra for use in the pitru tharpanam process. Actually, there are specific mantras for each of the 12 ancestors. Doing Pitru tharpanam with these 12 specific mantras is highly effective. For these mantras, refer to Sathguru Venkataraman's Siddha writings. Now, here is the easy pitru tharpana mantra.

Agasthiar.Org - Pitru Tharpana Mantra

மெய்யில் விளங்கும் ஜோதி
மெய்யுணர்ந்த மேல் நீத்தார்
மனங்குளிர வார்த்த எள் நீர் ஏற்று
மனங்குளிர்வீர் மனங்குளிர்வீர் மனங்குளிர்வீரே

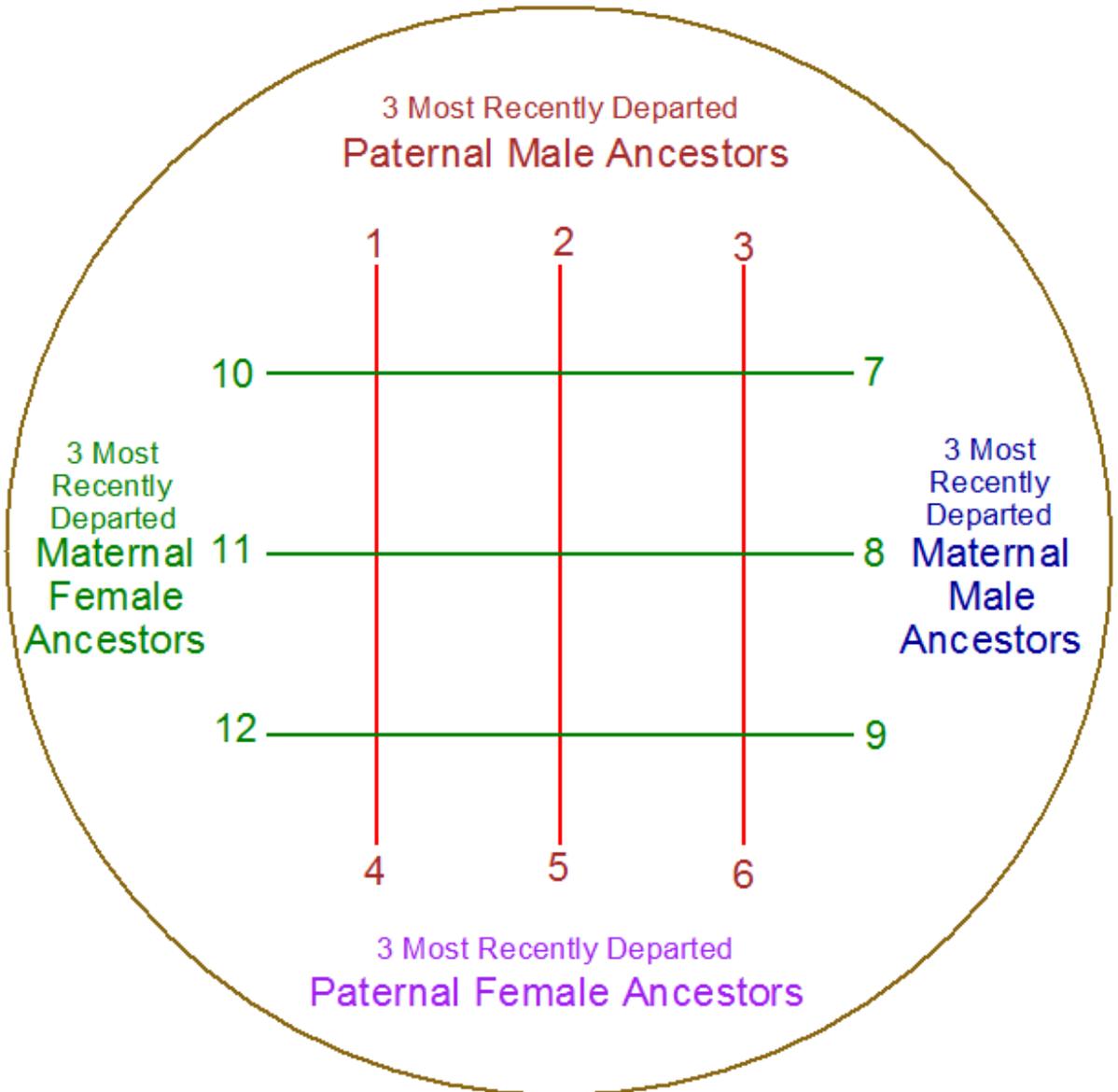
Agasthiar.Org - Kaarunya Tharpana Mantra

நீத்தார் நெடுங்கோளம் நின்ற வளி நீள்தாயம்
ஏத்தார் எங்கோளம் எங்குலத்தார் எம்புரம்
காத்தார் காரணத்தார் கரமேவி எள் புலமே
கூத்தார் குடப்பெருமாள் கொண்டாங்கே ஏகிடவே
முத்தார் முதம் வேதம் முற்றாய் மலர்ந்திடவே
பூத்தார் புனல் எம்பும் பூமறையாய் பூண்டும்
காருண்ய ஆரண்ய கற்பூரத் தர்பணமே
காருண்ய ஆரண்ய கற்பூரத் தர்பணமே
காருண்ய ஆரண்ய கற்பூரத் தர்பணமே

The Pitru Tharpanam Grid

for 12 Most Recently Departed Ancestors

made up of 3 horizontal and 3 vertical strips of darbha grass with a total of 12 tips representing these 12 departed ancestors



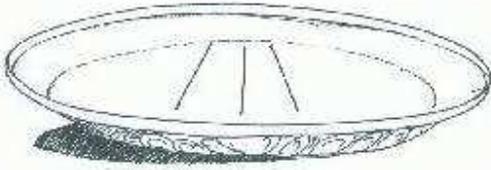
The Tharpanam Procedure Itself

◆ Here are the steps for doing tharpanam:

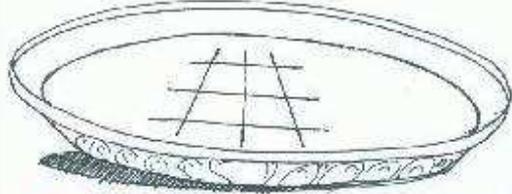
- ◆1. [Light at least two jyoti oil lamps or ghee lamps.](#)
- ◆2. Spread the mat and sit facing east.
- ◆3. Pray to Lord Ganesh first and then to Lord Surya Narayana who is the Lord of the pitru ancestral beings. Request them to bless the tarpanam pooja that you are about to perform.
- ◆4. Place the plate in front of you and arrange the tharpanam grid (made of dharbha grass) as shown above . First place the 3 vertical strips of darbha grass and then the 3 horizontal strips. Each line shown above should have a minimum of 3 darbha grass strips. Since there are 6 lines in total, you need a minimum of $6 \times 3 = 18$ darbha grass strips.

◆Now you can see that there are 12 tips in total, 3 at the top, 3 at the bottom, 3 on the right and 3 on the left. ◆The top 3 tips represent the 3 most recently departed male ancestors on the father's side. ◆The bottom 3 tips represent the 3 most recently departed female ancestors on the father's side. ◆The 3 tips on the right represent the 3 most recently departed male ancestors on the mother's side. ◆The 3 tips on the left represent the 3 most recently departed female ancestors on the mother's side.
- ◆5. With all your heart, request exalted pitru ancestral beings to be present in this tharpanam grid and accept the humble offerings that you are about to give. Now you are ready to do the actual tharpanam ceremony.

How to do Tharpanam

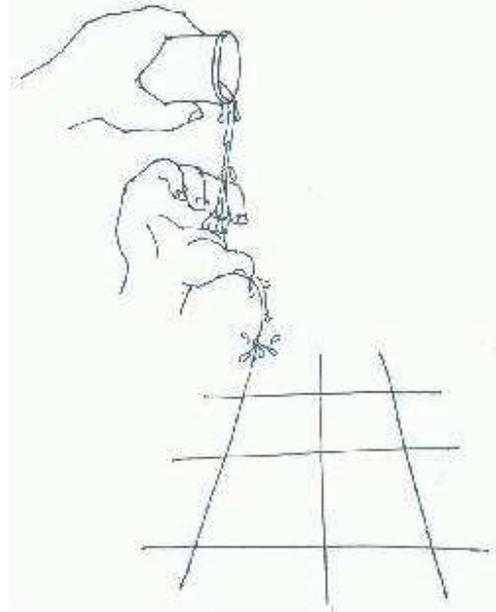
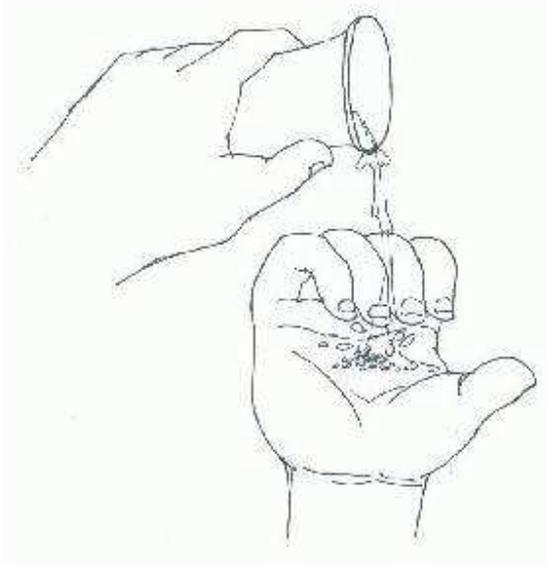


Step 1: Place three strips of Darbha grass on the plate parallel to each other



Step 2: Place three more strips each perpendicular to the previous set.

This creates a grid with 12 tips. Each tip represents a departed ancestor. Thus the 12 tips represent 12 of your departed ancestors. Refer to www.Agasthiar.Org for more details.



Step 3: Place sesame seeds on the palm of your right hand. Hold the water vessel in your left hand. Chanting the tharpana mantra (refer to Agasthiar.Org) and the appropriate ancestor's name, pour water on the sesame seeds in your palm while tilting your right hand such that both the sesame seeds and water fall on one of the tips of a darbha grass strip. The water should flow out of the gap between the right thumb and the right index finger as shown in the figure above.

Repeat this three times for each ancestor.

Repeat Step 3 on all 12 tips thus covering all 12 ancestors.

3 times per ancestor and 12 ancestors make a total of $3 \times 12 = 36$ repetitions of Step 3.

This completes the pitru tharpanam procedure. After this, do karunya tharpanam. Refer to Agasthiar.Org for details on what to do with the water, sesame seeds and darbha grass that you have used in this ceremony.

•6. This is the step where we actually offer tharpanam for the first departed ancestor on the tip marked 1 in the above diagram. In our example, the first departed ancestor is FFF (father's father's father, i.e., great grandfather) named Murugan. Place a pinch of sesame seeds on your

◆7. Now move on to the 2-nd tip and do the tharpanam 3 times on that tip. In this way, repeat this process for all 12 ancestors, i.e., on all 12 tips. 3 times per tip and a total of 12 tips would mean that you make a minimum of 36 tharpanam offerings for your pitru ancestors each time you do tharpanam.

◆8. Next, do karunya tharpanam for relatives, friends, people you respect, strangers, pets, plants, trees, animals, birds, creatures and insects. Before you do this, pray to Lord Varadaraja of Seshambadi and request His blessings for the departed beings you are doing karunya tarpanam for. Then chant the "*neethaar nedungolam*" karunya tharpana mantra given above and the name of the person as follows: "*neethaar nedungolam... tharpanamé Friend Suresh svadhaa namas tarpayami, Suresh svadha namas tarpayami, Suresh svada namas tarpayami*". As you are chanting the mantra, pour water on the sesame seeds (that are in the palm of your hand) slowly while tilting your hand to the right so that the water and sesame seeds fall in the middle of the grid. Do this 3 times for each person or plant or animal you are doing karunya tharpanam for. Here too, the water should flow down through the gap between your right thumb and right index finger as shown in the figure above.

◆9. When your tharpanam is complete, remove the *pavitram* from your ring finger, unroll it and place it on top of the darbha grass used in the tharpanam.

◆10. Pray to Lord Narayana and the exalted pitrus and prostrate yourself (full body namaskar) towards the southern direction 12 times.

◆11. Dispose off the sesame seeds, water and darbha grass used in the ceremony respectfully by depositing them into a flowing river or ocean or a large pond or well. An alternate method is to separate the sesame seeds from the water, pour the water alone at the base of sacred trees and feed the sesame seeds to birds. *The important thing here is that the sesame seeds should not sprout.* Why? Refer to Sathguru Venkataraman's Siddha writings for the answer.

Clarifications

◆Tharpanam is done only for departed beings, that is, those who have passed on. Tharpanam is not done for those who are alive.

◆If you don't know the name of an ancestor, that is fine. Just state the relationship alone and offer tharpanam for that ancestor.

◆If you know the *gotra lineage* of a person, say it just before you mention the relationship, e.g., *Sri Vatsa Gotra great grandfather Murugan* or *Vadhoola Gotra friend Suresh* in the examples above. If you do not know the *gotram* of the person or you do not know what *gotram* is, just ignore this step.

◆For those who wear the sacred thread, change it to your right shoulder at the beginning of the tharpanam ceremony and back to the left shoulder at the end of the ceremony. There are special mantras for this step. If you don't wear the sacred thread, ignore this step.

◆Can one do tharpanam for more than 12 departed ancestors? The answer is yes. But that is a

more advanced procedure and we are not going to cover that here.

◆ There are special mantras for each specific ancestor. These special mantras will have their special effect for sure. Consult the Sathguru's books for these special mantras.

◆ Sathguru Venkataraman gave us hundreds of unique tharpanam procedures. Refer to his Siddha writings for this information.

When to do Tharpanam?

◆ Sathguru Venkataraman said that according to Maha Guru Agasthiar, tharpanam should be done at sunrise.

◆ There is a tradition that says that tharpanam should be done at noon. If this is your tradition, please do follow that.

Where to do Tharpanam?

◆ You can do tharpanam right in the comfort of your home.

◆ But it is that much more effective to do it in temples and on the banks of sacred rivers.

◆ If you can do tharpanam in the [Pitru Moksha temples and sacred spots](#), that would be the best. More details in Sathguru Venkataraman's Siddha writings.

◆ [Pitru Mukti Sacred Spaces](#).

Can the son do tharpanam if the father is alive?

◆ The answer is YES.

◆ The most serious misconception regarding tharpanam is the idea that if the father is alive, the son should not do tharpanam. ◆ Sathguru Venkataraman taught that this idea is WRONG.

◆ Think of this key point: Are not the departed ancestors of the father the departed ancestors of the son too? Of course, they are. So the son should do ancestral tharpanam too.

◆ Note that the word "pitru" here refers to all departed ancestors and not just the father.

◆ The son has a pitru debt (debt to the ancestors) just as the father does. He has to discharge this debt just like his father has to discharge it.

◆ So it is important to shed this misconception rightaway.

◆ The father should do pitru tharpanam and so should the son and the son's son. In fact, if all three do it together, the pitrus will be very pleased!

Can women do tharpanam?

◆ The answer is YES.

◆ Sathguru Venkataraman gave us the revolutionary idea (in the 1980s) that women can do pitru tharpanam just as well as men.

◆ Think of this key point: If there are no sons in a family, does that mean the ancestors should be starved of tharpanam? The answer is NO. The daughters can certainly do tharpanam.

◆ For a man who had daughters but no sons, will anyone do tharpanam with more mental

involvement and dedication than his own daughters? NO. So these daughters can certainly do tharpanam for this (departed) man.

◆Note further that if others do tharpanam for this (departed) man, it will be karunya tharpanam and not pitru tharpanam. Whereas, if his daughters do it, it will be direct, full fledged pitru tharpanam.

◆Furthermore, there is the issue of mental involvement and dedication mentioned earlier. Because of this, it is ideal if these daughters do pitru tharpanam for this man (their father).

◆This does not mean that these daughters should make a big deal out of this and put on a show. That will only cause problems. They should do it quietly with humility and devotion. They should realize that their gotra rishi is watching and so they must do this quietly and with utmost respect, without making a show of it or drawing attention towards themselves. If they do it thus, their gotra rishi will be pleased.

◆However, in the general case (i.e., where there are both sons and daughters), since women generally have a lot more family responsibilities than men, the males in a family should take the lead and do tharpanam and not let that responsibility fall on womenfolk too.

◆But if the husband does not do tharpanam, the wife can make up for it by doing tharpanam.

◆Women who have lost their husbands or who are separated from their husbands can do tharpanam.

◆Women can do karunya tharpanam for those departed souls who cared for them.

◆Women should use white sesame seeds in their tharpanam. Why? Refer to Sathguru Venkataraman's Siddha writings for the answer.