SHRAADDHA

(पार्वण श्राद्धः - आश्वलायन गृह्य सूत्रम्)

annotation:
dr.m.narayana bhat
This exposition is based on आश्वलायन पार्वण श्राद्ध चन्द्रिका, a unique treatise in Kannada.

It seamlessly blends modern thoughts with traditional beliefs, customs and traditions and adopts a path-breaking approach in elucidating the underlying philosophy. While unfolding the mystery surrounding the formulae designed by महर्षि आश्वलायन, a great sage, it explodes several myths.

Disciples of महर्षि आपस्तम्ब and महर्षि बोधायन will discover that the basic principles enunciated here are not at variance.

The depiction reconciles the three paths - कर्म, उपासना, ज्ञान (worship, meditation and know-how) enabling readers of every stratum transform a protracted ritual (of merely obeying the commands of the family priest) into an awe-inspiring and extremely gratifying act of supreme delight.

This reflects vividly a practitioner’s direct cognition and insight cultivated over a period of 45 years.

_The narrator is an Udupi based thinker, researcher and teacher. He can be contacted on 0820- 4294886 or dr.m.narayana.bhat@gmail.com_
PART I: ASPIRATIONS, CONVICTIONS AND CONVENTIONS (07-20)

PART II: PREPARATORY (21-26)

PART III: THE NUCLEUS (27-32)

1. पाणिहोम 27
2. भोजन 28-30
3. पिंडप्रदान 30-32

PART IV: THE FINALE (33-35)

PART V THE CONCLUSIVE EPISTLE (36)

PART VII श्राद्ध – A ज्ञान यज्ञ WORKSHOP (37-43)

PART VI THE ANNEXE (44-57)

1. Introductory prayers 44-46
2. Chronicle of mantras 46-49
3. Esoteric overtones 49-51
4. अभिभवण mantras 51-53
5. अञ्ज प्रक्रिया 53-55
6. महालय श्राद्ध: 56-57
7. A typical layout 58
IT IS महाविष्णु ACROSS-THE-BOARD

पितृदेवताभ्यो नमः, विष्णुर्विष्णु:  
Thus begun, and interspersed often by His memoirs, a श्राद्ध ends with 

विष्णुभी नमो विष्णुभी नमो विष्णुवेनमः:  

एको विष्णुमेंहत्त भूरं पुरुषं भूतान्यनेकशः। वीत लोकान् व्याप्य भूतात्मा  
भुज्ञो विष्णु भुगव्यः।।

विष्णु personifies the Ultimate Truth. Permeating the three worlds, the universal Soul manifests in myriad forms and devours it in its entirety.

‘विष्णोह्यांक्षस्व; ‘विष्णोक्ष्यांक्षस्व; ‘सर्वेऽं पापदृष्टिनां चक्षुविश्राणिति  
केशवः; He prevents any evil eye befalling the food served to the विष्णुदेवा and पितृदेवा in a श्राद्ध.

हरिदर्षाता हरिभोक्ता हरिर्विश्र नरायणः। हरिविधुषीश्वरस्यो भुज्ञो भोजयते  
हविः। त्वांयोगिनाश्रिंनियंति त्वांयांजनक्षियजन्। हर्वक्ष्य भुषोक्ष्यां  
पितृदेव व्यरूपपुरुषः।।

He is an embodiment of food. It is He who bestows food and it is He who savours food. He is the one meditated upon by the adept and adulated by all.

It is He who personifies as विष्णुदेवा and पितृदेवा and duly apportions oblations offered.

One who meditates upon these divinities performs a यज्ञ which is His worship. (श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 8-23, 24 reaffirms this reality).
The word ‘विष्णु’ means expanse, pervasiveness and immanence. He enters, transcends (everything that can be seen and heard) and illuminates the three worlds and those beyond.

यज्ञ किंचित्जगत्सर्वं दृश्यते श्रूयते श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 9.15

A पितृयज्ञ involves several allusions of and pointers to the Lord. Here is a brief contour that can help one to perceive the milieu better.

यज्ञ - soul of a यज्ञ; satiates all the gods through यज्ञ.
यज्ञपति - presides over every यज्ञ; protects a यज्ञ.
यज्ञवन् - conducts a यज्ञ.
यज्ञभृत् - repository / guardian of a यज्ञ.
यज्ञकुल् - performs a यज्ञ to create and annihilate the world.
यज्ञ - the residue of a यज्ञ.
यज्ञांग - each part of his body represents a यज्ञ.
यज्ञवाहन - encourages people to perform a यज्ञ.
यज्ञभृत् - protects / devours a यज्ञ.
यज्ञसाधन - यज्ञ is a pathway leading to Him.
यज्ञांतक् - renders finality / decisiveness to a यज्ञ.
यज्ञगुह्य - the pith (insight /higher knowledge) of a यज्ञ.

References to अपि, वायु, इन्द्र, वरुण, रुद्र, आदित्य, आप:, पवमान सोमः, पृष्णु, सचित्, विश्वेत्र, पितर:, वैधानर and several others are, in fact, references to Him – for all of them are His imageries. एकं सतु विप्रा बहुधा बदन्ति (ऋग्र्वेद 6.3.22) see श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता (9.15).
# Glossary of Recurring Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindi</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>पितृ</td>
<td>parents, ancestors, descendants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>श्रद्धा</td>
<td>conscientiousness, faith, diligence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>श्राद्ध</td>
<td>adoration of a departed soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>कर्त्ता</td>
<td>one who performs the श्राद्ध.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>यज्ञ</td>
<td>act of devotion - worship, sacrifice, oblation into fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>संकल्प</td>
<td>declaration of a solemn vow to perform a virtuous act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>तुलसी</td>
<td>holy basil leaf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>भृंगराज</td>
<td>eclipta alba - a herb of the sunflower family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>कुश</td>
<td>a branch of sacred grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>पवित्र</td>
<td>ring of sacred grass like कुश/दर्भ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>कूर्च</td>
<td>2/3/7/9 कुश/दर्भ grass bundled together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>अक्षता</td>
<td>duly consecrated whole grains like rice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>गन्धा</td>
<td>sandalwood paste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>भस्म</td>
<td>sacred ash, usually residue of a यज्ञ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>विश्वेदेव</td>
<td>Lord’s delegate chosen to protect a ritual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ब्राह्मण</td>
<td>one invited to stand in for a पितृ or विश्वेदेव.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>पिन्ड/पिंड</td>
<td>a ball of rice ceremonially offered to the पितृ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>कलश</td>
<td>a water-pot duly consecrated for the ritual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>अर्घ्य</td>
<td>water offered in reverence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>पाद्य</td>
<td>washing the feet of a guest/deity in veneration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>आर्ाहन</td>
<td>invoking/investing divinity unto a person / object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>हव्य/कव्य</td>
<td>oblations offered to विश्वेदेवा and पितृ respectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>दक्षिणा</td>
<td>cash offered in a worship/honorarium to the priest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>प्रदक्षिण</td>
<td>clock-wise circumambulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>क्षण</td>
<td>assuming the role of a deity through the ritual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>अभिमार</td>
<td>sprinkling ghee over the platter &amp; food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Divinities, ancestors, saintly persons, स्वाहा and स्वधा merit everyday adoration. स्वाहा and स्वधा resonates represent the power of अश्रि (His spouses) and precede every oblation into fire. These words goad us to perform पंच महायज्ञ regularly.

We unfailingly contemplate upon and adore our पितृ. While some of them might have re-emerged in a physical form (reincarnation) more fortunate ones would have attained either one-off luminousness like a star or attained unison with the Lord.

We need a divine vision to visit them – like one that enabled Arjun to have विश्रामपद्धश्न – श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 11-8

*Here is what a devout person desires: showers, streams, breeze, light, heat, herbs, plants, flowers, fruits and milk are all conducive and supportive. This is critical to the success of every यज्ञ. (ऋ 1-6-18)*
MOTIVATION

An abiding outpour of wholesome parental love, affection, nourishment, purposeful education, initiation into our treasured value systems and adept counselling is what transformed us into matured, civilized citizens. Recounting, with reverence and a deep sense of gratitude, the memory of our beloved parents (and all those who played a pivotal role in our upbringing) is a part of our illustrious tradition. It is a manifestation of richness of our mind and spirit.

A beautiful portrayal of this can be found in a verse recited in a महालय श्रा: आब्राह्मणो ये पितृवंश जाता: मातुस्तथा वंशवामदीया:।वर्गेन्द्रेयस्मिन् मम दासभूता वृत्यास्तथे वाचित सेवकाद्रा। मित्राणि सख्यः पशवंश वृक्षा दृष्टाध्य पृष्टाध्य कृतोपकारः। जन्मान्तरे ये मम संगताद्रा तेभ्यः स्वधा पिण्डतमें ददामि।

Beginning with Lord ब्रह्मा we are indebted to many including those unseen, unknown people whose largesse benefitted us in our present / many of our previous births. When they are with us, we express these qualities of head and heart by touching their feet, waiting on them and fulfilling their desires. We derive supreme pleasure out of this. Alas! We cannot do any of these when they are not with us. But, we can certainly relish reminiscences of their life, express our gratitude and savour a sense of fulfilment and delight. Revisiting our parents’ contributions to our upbringing, cherishing supreme love and affection showered by them and adoring those others (animals,
flora and fountain included) whose mere presence was blissful would be more meaningful and simpler than spotting divinity in a photo, statue, idol, कलश (pot), मण्डल/ चक्र (a diagram).

In Vedic literature the words like ‘पितर’, ‘पितृ’, ‘पितु:’ have very wide connotation. They refer to (a) natural parents (b) one who performed sacrament i.e. उपनयन संस्कार (c) teacher (d) provider of food and (e) one who offered shelter and security. The canvas extends not only to our ancestors but every other conceivable animate and inanimate substance which provides sustenance i.e. water, food, vigour and virtues. The words पशवदश वृक्षा in the verse cited earlier are only indicative. In a wider context they represent every divine force transcending the three worlds.

‘श्राद्ध’ - ORIGIN and IMPORT:
श्राद्ध means allegiance, conscientiousness and diligence. It calls for unflinching faith and resolve to perform a dutiful act wholeheartedly, earnestly and with total devotion. Such a pious contemplation is श्राद्ध. An act of performing it truthfully and honourably is श्राद्ध. It is a wonderful mechanism beautifully crafted and gifted to us by men endowed with exceptional wisdom and divine experience. It enables us to orchestrate the implementation.

श्रद्धयाप्रि: समिधयते श्रद्धया हृयते हवि:। श्रद्धां भगस्य मूर्धनि वचस्सा वेदयास्मसि।। प्रियं श्रद्धं ददतः प्रियं श्रद्धं विदासतः। प्रियं भोजेसु यज्ञविदं म उदितं कृष्ठि ॥ यथा देवा असुरेपु श्रद्धामुग्रेपु चक्किरे। एवं भोजेपु यज्ञवस्माकमुदितं कृष्ठि ॥। श्रद्धां देवा यजमाना वायुयोप्या उपासते। श्रद्धां
हृदय्याकूल्या श्रद्धया विन्दते वसु ।।
श्रद्धां प्रातह्वामहे श्रद्धां मध्यंदिनं परि ।
श्रद्धां सूर्यस्य निमुचि श्रद्धे श्रद्धापयेह नः।।
ऋग्वेद 8.8.9)

It is श्रद्धा - dedication and commitment that ignites the fire. It is with श्रद्धा - allegiance that the offerings are to be made into the sacrificial fire. To be accomplished well, a job has to be done with श्रद्धा - dutifully, with commitment, believing it to be true, desirable and virtuous. This attribute ensures success in every other pursuit as well.

Let us zealously invoke the supreme energy (श्रद्धा शक्ति) of the Lord thrice a day with total allegiance. Let us solicit the same degree of commitment and steadfastness that the Gods demonstrated in defeating all evil spirits. May the Lord be compassionate to us, drive away our ignorance, extricate us from sinful tracks, help us acquire riches and reach higher, blissful strata.

It is widely believed that श्रद्धा and देशाद (allegiance and providence personified) form a very powerful combine. Reciting these two hymns and internalising ideologies enshrined therein is a sure recipe for success – not only in Vedic education but also in our vocational training and professional life.
RATIONALE:

The scriptures envisage that a departed soul seeks to fulfil desires, meet unresolved obligations, emancipate sins and pursue liberation through his/her delegate i.e. son. As a corollary, a son is duty-bound to perform post-death rituals and accomplish all such tasks which his parent would have normally performed. He should also ensure that this tradition is perpetuated by begetting worthy children.

CHARACTERISTICS:

श्राद्ध is a simple, inexpensive form of worship, a Vedic ritual, a यज्ञ as described by the Lord: श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता (4-24)

The Lord represents a यज्ञ – a sacrifice. He creates oblation. It is for His gratification that the oblation is being served. It is He who devours the oblation. The fire, the utensils, gadgets, appliances, the oblation, the act of pouring oblation into the fire and the persons
involved in the process are all His imageries. This is the emotion that drives the performer of the यज्ञ - he sees the Lord everywhere and in everything. He is one whose supreme aspiration has been fulfilled. He is one with the Lord in an exclusive blissful state.

A typical श्राद्ध involves
(a) sacrificing cooked rice into the consecrated fire,
(b) feeding ब्राह्मण – a minimum of two and
(c) offering पितृपिण्ड

Two deities, popularly called विष्णुवेदेवा (पुरुरव, आद्रेवच) are venerated. It is Brahma’s mandate that they arrive at the venue early and guard the ritual – lest evil spirits runaway with the offerings made to the पितृ.

Three generation of forefathers (पवरण पितृ) father, grandfather, great grandfather (or mother, paternal grandmother, great grandmother) are embodiments of र्सु, रूद्र आदित्य. They are satiated by performing annual rites and specifically on the eve of ceremonies like marriage. Their blessings are critical to the perpetuation and well-being of the family. Even when only one ब्राह्मण is invited, it is believed that the trio is in attendance.

This is an exclusive family affair and not a public function. Every member is devotedly committed to the process and hence will have little time to entertain other guests. There is no room for pomp or ostentation either.

PREREQUISITE:
The success of this sacrament hinges upon purity of everyone and everything that is aboard. Mantras, air, water, fire and the divine prowess of the ब्राह्मण are
utilised in the process of purification of all these. Vedic texts devote myriad verses extolling their virtues.

Recited while washing the feet of the ब्राह्मण, this verse affirms that (a) he represents entire commune of divinities and holy streams (b) his veneration and blessings lead to (i) emancipation of all sins (ii) banishment of poverty, agony, ailments and premature death (iii) discharge of all debts (iv) fulfilment of all desires – prosperity and happiness and (v) attainment of ‘अच्युतं पदं’ – an unassailable spot.

In view of this, abuse, defamation or censure of an erudite ब्राह्मण is immoral and a hasty, ruinous recipe.

Our esteem for the ब्राह्मण finds an expression in प्रदक्षिण (circumambulation) of the ब्राह्मण and washing of his feet by the कर्ता who sprinkles such water over own self. As an integral part of the drill, approval of the ब्राह्मण is obtained at every stage. His endorsement and ratification (tantamount to the sanction of the Lord) makes good any deficiency that may arise in the quality of the material, process or performance. Feeding him is like feeding the Lord and the पितृ and oblations poured into his palm are close to offering.
such oblations into duly consecrated fire. His support also boosts the morale of the कर्ता.

A copper pot, a lamp, flowers, sandal paste, a few grains of rice, sesame, beetle leaf and nut and holy ashes (भस्म), शुंगराज, तुलसी, दर्भं and water is all that is required. A meal and an appropriate दक्षिणा would only reinforce the value of this ritual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BODY</th>
<th>*bath * आचमन * wearing a पवित्र and कुश / दर्भं grass at waist and tuft * sprinkling consecrated water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MIND</td>
<td>*प्राणायाम *self-restraint * restricting contact with outside world * reciting Lord’s name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOUGHT</td>
<td>*controlling passions * rejecting evil thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAHMAN</td>
<td>*inviting only learned, virtuous, healthy person voluntarily observing self-restraint and celibacy from the previous day *partaking and sprinkling consecrated water * wearing a पवित्र.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE</td>
<td>sprinkling sesame * reciting mantras that drive away evil spirits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATERIAL</td>
<td>*acquiring wholesome substance through honourable means * ब्राह्मण affirmation *sprinkling consecrated water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANTRA</td>
<td>*choice of worthy priest *divine chants * seeking ब्राह्मण proclamation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A RATIONALIST VISTA

श्राद्ध touches our psyche – consciousness, beliefs, emotions, feelings and awareness (distinct from corporal traits that are common to all living beings - hunger, fear, sleep and procreation). Equilibrium between these two facets enables us to keep pace with the changing times and render our lives complete and meaningful. This calls for a more radical shift in our thought process and approach to rituals and sacraments:

श्राद्ध संकल्प often envisions liberation of the departed; worthy lineage and progression of the entire family. Perhaps, a more secular approach is to consider these as well intended aspirations and prayers than as a by-product of the ritual. These are noble thoughts that build optimism and confidence in the future, enable us to visit lovely dreams, infuse passion and keep motivating us. Unmistakably, this यज्ञ is a deliberated choice, performed for our own satisfaction. Through this endeavour we seek to reinforce prized qualities of head and heart that we treasure.

It is, perhaps, with this intent that the venerable sages crafted the ritual introducing several touching situations, hymns, rhymes, epics and couplets through the process. When we understand the import of each of these and perform this pious act in a chorus, we drift into an exotic world, enjoy the ecstasy and reach the zenith of human experience.

OUR CONVICTIONS:

The edifice of श्राद्ध is built on a number of principles, beliefs and attitudes. Codified and enshrined in several scriptures these are based largely on the findings and experiences of illustrious teachers:
(a) There are a number of stories, speculations, and conjectures – that manes enter the body of the 

ब्राह्मण or take the form of crows and partake the food; that mother सीता saw reflection of king दशरथ while serving food to a 

ब्राह्मण; that a group of students who stole their guru’s cow and had the meat (and reborn several times as animals and birds) could attain liberation thanks to the श्राद्ध performed by them. Is there any truth in these? Can these be proved? Should one believe these?

It would only be a misadventure to go into these and shake the foundations of deep rooted beliefs. A healthier approach would be to envision that these were written out to arouse some interest in the subject.

(b) Ardent conformists may often be tempted to warn us that a failure to perform these rites may attract the wrath of the पितृ. The reality, however, is that a feeling of guilt / ungratefulness is sufficient to burn us down. We cannot offer any thing material to those who are no more with us. But, we can certainly express our gratitude at least by remembering them. The real threat to our civilisation arises when we fail to demonstrate them when an opportunity arises.

(c) The trinity arrives at the venue a day before the ritual, gladly accepts the offerings and returns the next day.

(d) The departed souls assume a subtle form. Just as the air takes the shape of a balloon, a पितृ takes the shape of the पिण्ड offered to it. Epic महाभारत echoes this thought: The Lord has mandated that since the departed souls have no physical body, they assume the body of a पिण्ड and receive the offerings. It is none other than the Lord who devours such oblations.
GAYA – AN ELITE SPOT

There is no श्राद्ध without an allusion of Gaya and the presiding deity Lord गदाधर. Mythology versions that it was at this hallowed place that dreaded demon king of Gaya and a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, offered his own corpus to build a ‘यज्ञकुण्ड’. The proceedings are laced with utterings like; ‘गयायां श्रमपूज्यु सदसिद्धान्तपते;’ ‘गया गदाधर: प्रीयतां;’ ‘भोक्ता गदाधरः,’ ‘गयायां विष्णुपादादि (रूपरापदि) चतुर्दश पदेपु द्वंतरमक्षयमस्तु।’

A श्राद्ध is performed in the shade of a banyan tree to gratify the Supreme Lord who presides over this holy commune and accepts the oblations manifesting as सर्व पितु. A glimpse of his image is sufficient to satiate our three-fold indebtedness.

Even tiny पिंड offered in a श्राद्ध on the banks of river फाल्गुनी, it is believed, has lasting value leading to the progress of 101 families of 7 गोत्र - that of the father, mother, paternal and maternal aunts, sister, spouse, and daughter.

Of the several divine footprints at this sacred place 14 are of special significance - ईशान, विष्णु, ब्रह्मा, कालिनिक्य, चैतन्य (गाहपत्य, आहवनीय, दक्षिण) सूर्य, चन्द्र, गणेश, इन्द्र, अग्नि and काष्यप.
shraaddha

(e) ‘Agni’ manifests in a human body in three forms - गाहवपत्य at heart, दक्षिणाप्शि in the mind and आहर्नीय in the mouth. This belief supports the practice of offering oblations on the palm of a ब्राह्मण. The Lord affirms this in श्रीमद्भागर्द्गीता -15-14. अहं वैधानरोभूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाधिष्ठितः। प्राणपानसमायुतः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्षर्धम्// He dwells in the body of every organism and digests the food which it partakes.

(f) There is an interesting story of how Gods attending a यज्ञ escaped the fury of रावण by masquerading as birds. Lord Yama, who had chosen a crow, was pleased with this gene and granted a boon to the crows: they will have a privilege to share the offerings made at a श्राद्ध. This, perhaps, forms the genesis of a practice of offering a पिंड to the crows.

OUR CUSTOMS:

These are diligently guarded practices that as multi-layered shield preserving the sanctity and pristine format. These are not rigid, nasty or harsh imposts. They support the intent and dexterous performance of a solemn vow voluntarily undertaken to uphold and observe religious injunctions.

(a) The ritual is performed on the anniversary day (Indian calendar - तिथि) - an internal control system to avoid postponement on frivolous grounds. If there is any embargo (अशुद्धि i.e. birth/death in the family), it is performed at the end of stipulated period.

(b) The ब्राह्मण representing पितृ sits facing north. Silver, ash, odd numbers, circular diagrams through anti-clockwise moves and sesame are used in his service. विश्रेदेवा sits facing east and rice, sandal paste, square diagram, even numbers, clock-wise movement and
gold are used to greet him. These rules are framed to differentiate the two.
(c) To remain agile and alert, restraint is advocated in our routine starting with the previous day. Hospitality of others is not accepted. After the ritual, a sumptuous meal is taken so that an evening meal becomes redundant. This underscores the need to maintain proper physic and psyche.
(d) To remain focussed, contact with outside world is to avoided – lest passionate moments (e.g. arising from mercantile transactions) disturb mental peace.
(e) Obviously, aforesaid norms are applicable even to the invited ब्राह्मण as well.
(f) It is customary to kneel down to serve the विश्वेदेवा and पितृदेवता. This practice has its origin in a mythological event. In the court of Supreme Lord all the Gods squatted on the right knee while all the पितृदेवता squatted on the left knee to seek His dispensation.
(g) A constant dialogue with the ब्राह्मण may often seem unusual and unnatural. It is akin to a well-orchestrated musical performance. The singer and accompanying artists continually communicate with the other i.e. encourage, motivate, approve, throw challenges, correct and appreciate with a smile. Thus, they churn out a brilliant, captivating, memorable event through cohesion.
In our context, such interactions sustain the interest of everyone, help remain focussed, the ब्राह्मण remain conscious of the mantle they wear till the very end and ensure that the श्राद्ध is completed meticulously. (note exchanges like देवा: पितर: समाध्वं > < सुभसमास्महेऽ; प्रवर्तये > < प्रवर्तया; प्राप्नोतु भवान > < प्राप्नुर्दन्द्न; कररष्ये > < कुर्ष्याः; अत्रास्यतां > < ध्रोंसि)
ASPIRATIONS: Human dreams are myriad. There is no limit to the forms they assume.

The aspirations articulated here are noteworthy:
(a) May those engaged in munificent and philanthropic deeds proliferate.
(b) May no one be pushed to unfortunate begging or soliciting.
(c) May the treasure of Vedic knowledge and commune of learned, diligent practitioners grow.
(d) May allegiance and perseverance (श्रद्धा) grow.
(e) May food and nutrients flow profusely and support devout fulfilment of Vedic mandate i.e. पंचमहायज्ञ.
Perhaps, nothing can be more intense, pertinent and sophisticated than this - पुत्रसमृद्धि, वेदसमृद्धि, कर्मसमृद्धि, धर्मसमृद्धि, शास्त्रसमृद्धि, धन-धान्य समृद्धि and शांति-पुष्प-लुक्ष्य

TAKEAWAYS:

It would be futile to assign a cause and effect relation and expect material benefits to flow instantaneously. To envision that this planet is not merely a platform for rejoicing the riches that befall but also serves as a यज्ञभूमि and a कर्मभूमि would be a far superior approach. The farsightedness, value systems and doctrines presented to us through this beautifully designed ritual can certainly foster and sustain a spiritual fervour and open up several conduits of exceptional wisdom leading to refinement and sophistication. Thus it can turn out to be a ज्ञानयज्ञ. Other spinoffs include:

(a) an excellent drill in आतिथ्य i.e. on how to effectively play host in our day to day life,
(b) a preview of perseverance and hard work that our progression demands,
(c) incubation of a desire to up the scale, see fulfilment and contentment in life,
(d) a deep perception of goodness and godhood around us - virtues of every gift of nature i.e. ether, air, water, plants and trees, birds, animals etc. – this underscores our dependence on (and the need to safeguard) each of them,
(e) portrayal of our noble aspirations and dreams and
(f) splendid poetry, brilliant imagery, amazing dreams etc. for one with an aesthetic taste.
PART II: PREPARATORY

A rundown of a common and universally adopted process of श्राद्ध is presented here incorporating the directions of great teachers like आश्वलायन, आपस्तम्ब and बोधायन. The details have seen transformation over the years. The spirit, however, has been admirably guarded.

Note: Rigvedic hymns are cited as per ashtaka classification - अष्टक, अध्याय, वर्ग. Details of such citations are chronicled in annexure – pages 46-49 in sequential order now on starting with (R.1).

PREPARATORY:

- A bath, आचमन, प्राणायाम and पन्द्र्त्रधारण to promote internal and external purity.
- पन्द्र्त्रधारण – it is propitious (R.1)
- Three pieces of कुश / दर्म्भ are placed on the seat and worn around waist, यज्ञोपर्वीत and on the crown
- A narrative of time and space - year, month, date, day, time etc. as per the Indian calendar. This देश-काल संकीर्तन draws our attention to the expanse of Lord’s creation. It helps us to (a) migrate to a realm free from our ego, arrogance etc. and focus, with all humility and devoutness, on the virtuous act on hand and (b) affirm that day and time are appropriate with due regard to prohibitions, if any.

संकल्प – AVOWAL OF INTENT:

- A resolve is made consciously with purity of head and heart, in quietness, to perform a virtuous act. The purpose of the mission, the chosen process and the action plan for the event are pronounced in the
presence of virtuous ब्राह्मण. Stated objectives are (a) appeasement, progression and liberation of the departed souls and (b) wellbeing of the entire family. These are our aspirations and not necessarily the end result of the ritual.

- The chosen format involves (a) venerating विद्वेषदेवता named पुरुषर्व and आद्यर्ब and three generations (पार्वण) - father, grandfather and great grandfather in the case of father’s anniversary (mother, father’s mother and father’s grandmother on mother’s anniversary) (b) oblations into fire (c) a feast and (d) offering पिण्ड.

CONSECRATION OF WATER:

- Water required for the यज्ञ is poured into a copper pot imploring flow of holy waters. (R.2) Sandal paste (गन्धा) (R.3), कुश /दर्म (R.4), a few grains of rice (R.5), beetle nut (R.6) and दक्षिणा (gift in cash - R.7). It is hoped that the sacrificial post is firm and well enclosed (R.8) गन्धा, अक्षता and पुष्प are offered to round up the worship. This consecrated water is used through the ceremony.

- तिलोदक is prepared in a separate pot following the same process. तिल (R.9) and श्रृंगरज are added (R.10).

OPENING PRAYERS:

In order to disengage from mundane chores and focus on divine reflections several hymns are recited. They are aimed at internal purification and building rectitude. This is also a ज्ञान यज्ञ. The mantras provide both fuel and fuel sticks required. The feelings that emerge, cues that flow out, excitement that it
generates, the human values it stimulates, lessons it provides create a humbling delight. To profit from them, appreciation of the context and import of the mantras becomes critical. The mantras narrate, in an awe-inspiring manner, the expanse and magnificence of His creation as also His supreme command over the entire universe. An appreciation of this reality mollifies our ego, false pride and arrogance and instils dignity and humility in us.

The mantras vindicate divinity in earth, air, water, light, firmament, trees and vegetation that provide shelter, nourishment and medication for the good of all living organisms. In fact, they endorse goodness in every aspect of His creations. They underscore the interdependency between man and his environment convincingly and stir up our admiration and love for the nature. All these have been crafted by Him for our sustenance. Here is a couched but, incisive counsel - to abstain from pollution, misuse or destruction and to protect and conserve them for the future generation.

(Annexe 1 - pages 44-46).

PURIFICATION:
Consecrated water is splashed all-over - including the material set aside for the यज्ञ. Prayers are addressed to मरुतः अशि and इन्द्र. Mere recall of पुण्डरीकक्ष induces the serenity and tranquillity. (R.11,12 & 13).

To be effective the कर्तव्य has to remain pure - untainted and sin free. As a safeguard, an expiatory measure is built into the ritual - on payment of an appropriate penalty (described as ब्रह्मदण्ड) to the ब्राह्मण assembly that would condone deficiencies, if any, affirm atonement and his admissibility to perform the ritual.
RECEPTION and ENTREATY:

With तिल, कुश and कलश in hand, the कर्ता would make a प्रदक्षिण (clock-wise circumambulation) of the ब्राह्मण. (R.14 also see page 12).

Each one of them is distinctly greeted and an appeal is made to: (a) remain focussed through the ceremony calmly and dutifully alongside the कर्ता (b) affirm that the कर्ता is eligible and competent to complete the task (c) endorse that the time and place are appropriate for the ritual (d) testify that the material procured is befitting and (e) authorise the कर्ता to move on.

This demonstrates (a) our respect for them (b) and belief that their approval will eradicate inadequacies, if any. The ब्राह्मण would positively respond to each of the requests. The proceedings would continue under their stewardship.

ENTRUSTMENT:

The कर्ता would individually request them to represent and appear on behalf of specified deities - specifying their name and गोत्र. This is called ‘क्षण’ – a request to co-operate with the कर्ता by accepting to play roles assigned till the end of the ritual. The ब्राह्मण visualise and assimilate the attributes of the deity to be represented by them and articulate their consent to embark on this joint mission in perfect harmony.

पाद्य:

A circular मण्डल is made on the floor, ब्राह्मण is requested to place his feet thereon and the कर्ता would wash the feet envisioning that respective deity is being venerated (R.15). The कर्ता would then sprinkle that water (तीथव) on the self. (R.16). कर्ता would clasp the hand of each of the
श्राद्धण to formally invite them once again and seek their approval to proceed with the ritual.

CHASING THE EVIL:
Sesame seeds are sprinkled on the floor to create a protective shield. *(R.17)*. A few pieces of तिल कुश are placed in the south-western direction envisioning that 8 वसु 11 रुद्र and 12 आदित्य will shield कर्ता and the यज्ञ. The श्राद्धण confirm that all these are conforming. It is customary to evoke holy place Gaya and the presiding deity Lord गदाधर in every श्राद्ध. The aspiration is that one currently underway assumes the same significance as the one performed at hallowed Gaya. *(see page 16)*

पाक प्रोक्षण:
Duly consecrated water is splashed over the food cooked for the ritual. This is intended to wipe out impurities caused by any evil glare or accidental inhalation of the food. *(R.18)*.

श्राद्धण आराधनः
श्राद्धण are requested to remain composed and accept the seat. It is customary to kneel down *(see page 18)* before श्राद्धण for veneration. Appropriate objects (अर्घयव, वस्त्र, गन्धा, पुष्प, दक्षिण) are used and the service is offered twice - there are 2 विष्णुदेव (R.19).
The श्राद्धण representing पितृ is adulated in the same manner. *(R.20&21)* The contemplation is that they are our पितृ in the form वसु, रुद्र, आदित्य. If only one श्राद्धण is invited to represent them service is offered thrice, each time mentioning the name and गोत्र.
shraaddha

Since an elaborate worship is not feasible at this juncture, their pardon is sought for the shortfalls. It is customary for the ब्राह्मण to (a) affirm that they have, indeed, assumed the role assigned to them and (b) approve, acknowledge and appreciate each of the offerings. (Note expressions like सुस्वागतम्, सुपाद्यम्, सुआसनम्, सुपुष्पः, सुगरधः)

Note: if suitable candidates are not available, it is customary to invoke deities into a bundle of कुश / दर्म. This is a कूच श्राद्ध.
PART III: THE NUCLEUS

A. पाणि होम:

- There is no अग्निकुण्ड (pan, crater, depression or enclosed place) for this यज्ञ. It is performed in the fire ingrained on the palm of the ब्राह्मण. The belief is that अग्नि, the Supreme Lord, is omnipresent and manifests in myriad forms (vide R.V.1-5-14)

It is widely believed that deities prefer to accept the offerings through proxies. Cooked food is offered through the medium of Agni. He is हव्य/ कव्यर्शन i.e. one who apportions and transmits offerings to those for whom it is meant.

Disciples of आध्वलायन (ऋग्वेद) school prefer to make the offerings on the palm of the designated ब्राह्मण – this is called ‘पाणि होम’.

Adherents of यजुर्वेद (आपस्तंब/ बोधायन) schools make such offerings into duly consecrated fire.

- A भस्म मण्डल is drawn on the floor to create a protective shield on which a banana leaf (or any appropriate substitute) is laid. (R.22 to 25).
- The palm of the ब्राह्मण who stands for the पितृ is cleaned and अभिभार is done. Fistful cooked rice is duly consecrated. One half of this is for सोम and the other half is for अग्नि (R.26).

His pardon is sought for shortcomings, if any, in veneration. He is beseeched to bestow श्रद्धां मेधां यशः प्रजां विद्यां बुद्धिः विरं बलं आयुष्यं तेज आरोग्यं देन्द्ह मे कव्यर्शन - virtuous qualities, a healthy and meaningful life.
# Transmission of Oblations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pouring cooked food into fire</td>
<td>For 1. सोम 2. अग्नि</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal</td>
<td>For those who are not entitled to share the offerings into the fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leftover meal</td>
<td>For those in slavery/captivity eagerly awaiting feed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leftover water</td>
<td>For those in a tormented world and are awfully thirsty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>पिण्ड – rice balls</td>
<td>For पार्वत्य पितु – three generations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particles of cooked food</td>
<td>For those forefathers not entitled to a पिण्ड – 4th / or earlier generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of cooked food</td>
<td>Sniffed by the कर्ता to satiate parental genes in him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smearing</td>
<td>For relatives who accompany पितु - ones not satisfied with what they get.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littering- विकिर</td>
<td>For such विद्येदेवा who is not entitled to oblations in other forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littering- प्रकीर</td>
<td>For those who departed before (or without) being duly consecrated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. ब्राह्मण भोजन:

- In this भोजन यज्ञ the mouth of the ब्राह्मण serves as the अग्नि‌कुण्ड. A number of prayers are made to preserve pristine nature of the यज्ञ. These include निसुपर्ण, श्रद्धामुक्त, राक्षोमुक्त, अश्रमुक्त intended to (a) avoid earthly distractions and ensure that ब्राह्मण remain focused (b) drive away all those evil spirits who await opportunities to snatch the offerings made to the deities (c) isolate hidden impurities in the food, if any, and (d) ensure that the food offered promotes
the development of a healthy body and mind to perpetuate a healthy tradition. (page 51-53)

- After the food is served (items without salt are served first) reciting a श्रीमद्भगर्द्गीता श्लोक, ब्रह्मार्पण is done i.e. it is dedicated to the Lord. (page 10).

It is customary to mix cooked food well before being offered into duly consecrated fire. In this case, however, the कर्ता symbolically touches (अभिमर्शन) the palm of the ब्राह्मण who, in turn, mixes the food served.

- The aspirations expressed here are that (a) यज्ञ under progress is alike the one performed under a banyan tree at गया and appeases गदाधर (b) the mother Earth is the platter on which meal is served and the sky is the lid (c) mouth of the ब्राह्मण acts as a conduit for the offerings made to the commune of deities (d) the Lord shields this यज्ञ (e) all the deities accept the offerings made and that (f) the offerings be abundant and enduring.

- It is customary to request ब्राह्मण to dine peacefully, keep aside what they do not like and call for what they relish most and ensure that they do not feel hungry at night.

- Noticing the glee on the face of the ब्राह्मण the कर्ता would seek their confirmation that they are fully satisfied with the meal. A prayer follows. (R.31).

- At the end of the meal the ब्राह्मण is requested to set apart a small portion of the food and water on the floor. This is for those who are tormented, deprived and the ones who are not eligible for other offerings.
This यज्ञ begins with offerings devotedly made to satiate पश्चात्यगान - 5 vital airs. प्राण (in the heart purifying blood) अपान (in the rectum exuding impurities out) समान (in the abdomen regulating digestive power) व्यान (in the neckline attuning the voice) and उदान (circulating all around and fine-tuning the flow of blood) First five offerings follow this line: श्रद्धायां प्राणे निविषोमुतं जुहोमि शिवो मा विशाप्रदाहाय ....... स्वाहा. This is अमृतं – nectar. Auspicious because it is यज्ञ शिष्ट – what is left after being first offered to the Lord. It is now being offered with conscientiousness, faith and diligence. May it enter the system gently to serve a noble cause i.e. gratifying of the Lord by soothing the blaze of hunger.

It is He who manifests as वैश्नानर / जाठराष्ट्री in every organism to devour every type of food – eat, drink, lick and chew. The sixth one is for the ब्रह्मन्. The intent is clear – there is an urge to conjoin and be one with the Eternity.

The कर्ता serves water (known as आपोशान) at the start (this nectar serves as a foundation for the food and soothes and wets the food pipe) and at the end (this avoids nudity of the अन्नब्रह्मन्).

C. पिण्डप्रदान:

- After an appropriate संकल्प is made, a bed of कुश – दर्भा grass is made for laying गिण्ड - this is a दर्भसिन for the पितृ. Three (some schools advocate six i.e. including their spouses) balls of rice mixed with a few grains of sesame are placed on this bed mentioning the
गोत्र and name of each of the पितृ in succession. A few grains of loose rice are also placed just behind each पिण्ड - these are meant for those others who follow the पितृ, like a family of bees.

This is a wish affirmed by every कर्ता: This यज्ञ be as effective as the one performed on the banks of holy river फल्गुनी at गया under the shade of a banyan tree and the offering be plentiful.

- It is believed that the पितृ have no physical body and after accepting the offerings they emerge in the shape of पिण्ड (just as the air in a balloon takes the shape of the balloon).
- Cooked rice stuck to the palm of the कर्ता while making पिण्ड is smeared (rubbed) on the दभाव. This is for those who are not entitled to receive food in the form of a पिण्ड.
- A fistful of cooked rice is sniffed by the कर्ता – an offer made to the genes of the पितृ which he carries.
- पिण्ड पूजा is performed offering ghee for अभ्यंग followed by a full service including अर्घयव, गरधा, पुष्प, र्स्त्र, धूप, दीप, ताम्बूल, दक्षिण, नेवेद्या, प्रदक्षिण and नमस्कार. Decor is a feminine vocation and hence adornment of the पिण्ड is done of the by wife of the कर्ता.
- उपस्थान (recollecting with gratitude the memory of the पितृ, remaining close to them – venerating and doing what they would like one to do) would follow. The belief is that we adore none other than Lord
जनार्दन – the one who answers prayers of all devotees and banishes their troubles.

• As an expression of our esteem, we tender तिलोदक on the पिण्ड (flowing between thumb and index finger) to complete the offering.

• Prayers are offered recollecting the time spent with the forefathers, (R.32, 33).

• There are three other groups to whom cooked rice is to be offered: (a) some विद्वेदवा prefer to wait until the others complete their meal. A few grains of rice are littered (विकिर) on the floor for them (b) पितृ who departed before they were born or before their sacrament and those alienated or estranged ones. A few grains of rice are strewn (प्रकिर) on the floor for them (c) a पिण्ड is offered for those who attained celestial status thanks to their noble deeds - regardless of consecration of their corpus in fire. (R.34).
PART IV: THE FINISH

स्वस्तिवाचन स्वधावाचन:

After ब्राह्मण भोजन and पिण्डप्रदान, the place is cleaned. दक्षिण is respectfully tendered – gold coin to विश्वेदेवा and silver coin to the पितृदेवता. However, circumstances will determine the form and the extent of the remuneration offered. The stipulations suggest that one should be generous in doing so.

The ब्राह्मण are requested to pronounce that: (a) the यज्ञ has been completed meticulously (b) they are delighted by the earnestness on display (c) the desires of the कर्ता be fulfilled (d) all the deities are satisfied with this worship (e) the food offered is bountiful and (f) the family members would attain greater heights and live long in good health. The ब्राह्मण would affirm all these. This is, indeed, a reaffirmation by the Lord. (R.35)

गोत्राशिष्यं:

Aspirations of the family are now voiced. The ब्राह्मण would pronounce that they are noble desires and will be realised (details on page 19-20).

पिण्डोढारणं:

The cluster of पिण्ड including the दर्शान is moved out and released into a pond or river. This is to ensure that its sanctity is preserved and it does not fall into wrong hands. Mantras recited at this juncture portray one’s life ambitions. (R.36)
तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं

The ultimate aspiration of every devout person is to attain His lotus feet. It is an exalted world of matchless joy with no signs of distress or grief. This world is a brimming, bristling and recoiling fountain of boundless supreme bliss and paramount kinship.

This supremely delightful spot refers to the freedom from the shackles of illusory perceptions about the Manifest and experiencing the spiritual, transcendent nature of what is not manifest - Consciousness or the Truth.

Wise men unfailingly cast their eye on this unique spot and pursue their goal assiduously.

While the headway to this incomprehensible, ineffable world may elude even the strongest ascetic practicing hardest of austerities, once conquered, no one falters i.e. returns to this mundane world.

*Also see* श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 8.21&15.6 कठ 3.8.9 सुण्डक 3.1.6 बृहत् 4.3.32 तै 4.1.6

श्राद्ध वियोजः:

It is time for the dispersal of deities (including विष्णुदेव and पितृदेवता) invoked earlier and to rejoice in a moment of fulfilment. As a symbol, दर्शनश्रृंखला (to which leadership of this यज्ञ was assigned) is released. *(R.37)*

BLESSINGS:

श्राद्धम् who delightfully spent the day with the कर्ता conducting this noble deed ought to be thanked profusely. They are images of great sages like वसिष्ठ and वामदेव. It is with their benevolence that the ritual is completed systematically and the कर्ता could appease his पितृ. *(R.38, 39)*
SEEKING PARDON:
One should also plead pardon for the inconveniences caused to them, inadequacies in the hospitality or any indifference shown to them. *(R.40)*

They respond by saying that they have disregarded all pains and that the ritual has been completed in a healthy and comprehensive manner. It is believed that these words coming from learned and devout ब्राह्मण would offset any fault and greatly enhance the value of this यज्ञ.

ब्रह्मार्पणः

This यज्ञ is dedicated to Him. कर्ता beseeches Him to accord finality (disregarding all the shortcomings /excesses that might have inadvertently crept in on account of his ignorance or folly) to this यज्ञ. *(R.41)*

The reckoning is that it was made possible only by His munificence (all the inputs – desire, devotion, drive and substance were bestowed by Him). It was He who manifested in the form of पितृ this day. This यज्ञ rightfully belongs to Him. Hence, it is only appropriate that all of it is tendered at His feet. He knows how to apportion the fruits.

His three names – अच्युत, अनन्त, गोविन्द are voiced thrice. This, it is believed, will (a) redeem all inadequacies in the performance of the ritual and (b) ward off fear of toxicity, disease, death, fire, theft etc.

ADIEU:
As the learned ब्राह्मण take leave. It is a mark of respect to accompany them up to the gateway.

At the end, what a magnificent feeling it is! It is much like a devout painter, sculptor, carpenter, tailor or poet rejoicing at product of his labour of love.
PART V: THE CONCLUSIVE EPISTLE

The value system arrayed here convincingly establishes ‘परम पद’ as a definitive goal and guides us through aptness of various strategic tools and lays a well-defined road map enabling us to capitalise glorious opportunities we are endowed with and see fulfilment in life.

This thought process induces and seduces us to convert our daily chores into an inexpensive and heart–warming, extremely gratifying यज्ञ. It is also fulfilling – because we are vindicating our existence by not being a burden on this earth, earnestly pursuing धर्म, fulfilling Lord’s mandate, funnelling all that we are endowed with unto where it rightfully belongs.

As we approach the finale, this is the counsel: follow the footsteps of the पितृ who have attained वनिष्ठत्व (eminence, grace). The legendary पुरुष सूत echoes this: (also see श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 4-15 note the word मुमुक्षु)

र्न्द्सष्ठत्र् (eminence, grace)

The legendary पुरुि सूत echoes this:

(ईशार्स्य 3 labels this as a आत्महनन - suicide)

The origin as also the end of this universe is a यज्ञ. What emerges in the intermission is also a यज्ञ. It is the act of a यज्ञ that transforms one into a साध्य (one who is rejoicing supreme bliss savouring ज्ञानमृत/attaining godhood by performing ज्ञानयज्ञ) and a देवता. It is यज्ञ that brought them महिमा – supremacy/fame and guided them to the exalted परमपद of the यज्ञपुरुष.

Now it is our turn!

The message enshrined in every scripture is loud and clear. One who fails to seize this opportunity subsists like an animal, fails, falls and perishes like any other animal.

(ईशावास्य 3 labels this as a आत्महनन - suicide)
PART VI श्राद्ध – A ज्ञान यज्ञ WORKSHOP

परम पद, the exalted status, is the ultimate goal. ज्ञान, knowing the truth about it, is the vessel that can ferry unto it. The process of acquiring or building this boat is यज्ञ. Thus, ज्ञानयज्ञ represents collective efforts aimed at gaining the wisdom dispelling ignorance and doubts.

Repeatedly reciting the couplets or tunefully rendering Vedic chants does not take us anywhere. To profit from them we have to comprehend the purport of each of those, internalise them, turn them into our eulogies and prayers. We have to systematically and relentlessly contemplate on them. More importantly, we have to live in conformity with them. Stop not (as long as we are sheltered in this physical body) even if we sight our goal – there could be slippages even at this stage!

राधा implies leading a lifestyle under the pious tutelage of the Lord. सर्वस्य तपसो मूलमाचारेः; आचारः प्रथमो धर्मः:
This is an exclusive club. Only those with (a) unflinching devotion (b) absolute faith in Vedic literature (c) conviction in the existence of other world and (d) highest reverence for the preceptors (the handbook is not self-instructive and the nectar springs only with the benediction of an enlightened soul - see श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 4-36) qualify to be its members.
And, there are potholes, landmines and stormy weather to reckon with on this long treacherous journey. While कठ likens the path to a sharp knife मुण्डक clarifies that study of
scriptures, discourses, intellectual exercises are not sufficient and alerts that this is not for the faint hearted. In \textit{श्रीमद्भगर्द्गीता} 7-3 the Lord muses that while hardly one among thousands of those who are eligible makes an honest attempt and seldom one such diligent practitioner succeeds. This is not a one-off drill. To tread on a path where most dread and others sweat and fume, one has to muster extra-ordinary perseverance, courage, vigour, devotion and chiefly, spiritual divine intermediation. Tread we must on this track. For a human being, there is no other corridor - short or circuitous (कर्मेवेंह कर्माणि जिजीवितेन्द्रता समा: ईशावास्य -2). The forewarnings should only add to our resolve and commitment. This is a stride taken by great men in discharge of their duties (determined by \textit{वर्ण-आधम धर्म} - the status in the society, stage of life and circumstances). Even a आत्मज्ञानि, a realised soul, a आत्मकाम, one who has no desires left, follows this dictum. They do so to maintain the world order as also to guide others. Frustrations and failures often arise from disconnect with the reality. Accidents can often be avoided by tightening the bolts and nuts and keeping the vehicle fit. We tend to habitually ignore such small measures that can make big differences in life. Not complying with \textit{स्वधर्म} is tantamount to disregarding the mandate of the Lord (to cultivate gods who, in turn, foster the mankind - \textit{श्रीमद्भगर्द्गीता} 3-11). This renders one ineligible even for an entrance test. And more significantly, causes a major disconnect. The best way to begin, therefore, is to fine-tune one’s lifestyle. And, turn it into a silky way to परम पद: Count on what Lord says: (\textit{श्रीमद्भगर्द्गीता} 6-17)
Adherence to स्वःथम् removes the smog masking the अन्तःरात्मण्. The resultant rub off is the best way of removing all obstacles and vanquishing enemies. Often they refer to a group of six - काम (perverse, irrational longing, lust, desire), क्रोध (fury, passion, anger), लोभ (lust, greed, cupidity), मोह (indiscrimination, perplexity, delusion,), मद (pride, arrogance, insolence and मत्सर (intoxication jealousy, envy). The Lord describes desire and anger as insatiable fire and innate, invariable enemies (श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 3-37, 38).

Internal enemies have the propensity to (a) push one to a self-destructive mode and (b) breed external enemies. Uprooting these forces from within - अभ्यरतर शुद्धि or शोच is a prerequisite for our evolution (श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 2.63). नित्य विधि (daily tasks) have in-built mechanisms to attain this systematically – मार्जन, मन्नाचमन, अघमर्यण.

In a नित्य विधि the संकल्प clearly sets ‘appeasing the Lord’ as the objective: If these are (a) uninterruptedly (b) efficiently and (c) consciously performed with a pure intent, a unique rapport is established with the Lord. This matures into unanimity of objectives, thoughts and actions and realisation of all aspirations. धन-धारण्य समृद्धि, वेदसमृद्धि, तन्तुवर्धन, कर्मसमृद्धि (see page 20).

The divine spirit sparked by this process displaces all evil forces. The time is now ripe to strengthen divine
qualities (a list of these can be seen in श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 16-1to3 & 18-42 श्रीमद्भागवतम् 7-11).

Vacillating and dithering nature of the senses pose real challenges. Mind is their master. The way it directs other sense organs (influenced by the people around or swayed by experiences of the past determines) the progression or regression of a person. Mastering the mind is a very arduous task and at a time when सत्त्वगुण is dominant one has to seize the opportunity and plug every conceivable duct promptly lest these adversaries reappear in a guise and spoil the party. This drill has to be repeated relentlessly.

- Wealth (physical, intellectual, spiritual & divine assets included) is to be acquired by and expended for noble cause. Creation of wealth is never spurned – provided there is यज्ञता – nobility at all times. In fact, a ग्रहस्थ is duty-bound to remain gainfully employed - he is obliged to support all others in different stages of life.
- Maintaining good health and longevity is a part of शरीरवृति व्रतम्: अन्तरुल्लसित स्वच्छशक्ति पीयूषपोषितम् / भवत्पूर्णोपभोगाय शरीरमिदमस्तु मे ॥ The objective is pious – to remain agile and alert so as to be able to perform a यज्ञ effectively and fulfil Vedic mandates. It is also required to devour fruits surfacing therefrom or affluence conferred by the Lord.
- Pursuit of acquittal from sins should be seen in this context – accumulated sins distort our vision and frustrate all our efforts (secular education and development of professional skills included) and hinder our progress in every walk of life. Moral turpitudes (चिकित्सा) and accumulated sins (संचित पाप)
create a long chain of hunger, fear, grief, diseases, mishaps, premature death etc. Described as दुःस्र्प्न they denote inextricable miseries of secular (earthly) life and worldly illusions. They render noble deed ineffective. Like a small seed growing into a huge tree yielding plentiful fruits, minor slippages often cause infinite misery. To overcome these, timely and decisive atonement and relief measures have to be enforced.

Measures like ब्रह्मदण्ड in a श्राद्ध should not be seen as a quick gate-pass. It is an opportunity to introspect, confess, repent, accept an open-house reprimand, ungrudgingly undergo expiation and swear not to repeat. This is an inestimably mighty, destructive weapon and has to be viewed as a deterrent not reparatory. Taking a cue from the सम व्याधा story (page 53) one can surmise that a noble deed is often not enough to undo an amiss.

- Approach food (water, vegetation, medicinal herbs, fruits included) with respect. It has to be adored, protected and diligently used – अन्नं न पनद्यात् तत् व्रतम्, अन्नं न परिच्छीत, तत् त्रतम्. Desire and ability to produce more has to be generated - अन्नं बहुकुरीत् तत् त्रतम्. These concepts have been mirrored in several scriptures (श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 17, तैन्तिक योग 3.7.8-9, छान्दोग्य 7.26.2). This will be a reality only when adequate and timely heat, light and water are bestowed by the Lord at appropriate places. The धन-धान्य समुद्धि works as a supportive pillar to कर्मसमुद्धि. See guidelines portrayed on page 30 and 53-54
shraaddha

- There is an onus to ensure वेद समृद्धि by undertaking स्वाध्याय, प्रवचन and प्रचारण. No यज्ञ can be undertaken sans Vedic education. Veda is described as यज्ञिनी - one that carries us to virtuous deeds. Therefore, we seek an environment that is congenial to Vedic education – erudite teachers with noble intent, affable association (total unanimity and absence of enmity) invigorating weather (extremity hampers learning process) and tranquillity all around. Successful completion of the यज्ञ calls for ability to comprehend, to retain and recall when it is required. This comes as His grace.

- It is also obligatory to pursue तन्तुवर्धन - leave a trail of worthy traditions behind by begetting worthy children - of course with the blessings of पितुदेव now appearing as द्रवु, रुद्र and आदित्य. Words like वीर, सूचीर, प्रजा etc. have been used in this context. Here a वीर, सूचीर is one who is erudite in Vedic scriptures and proficient in devotedly adhering to Vedic dictates, one who stands out in (and adds sheen to) a commune of scholars. He is the one who upsurges his parents and teachers into limelight. For a teacher प्रजा means generations of meritorious and worthy शिष्य, शिष्य of शिष्य and so on. The lineage paves the way for वेद समृद्धि and कर्म समृद्धि.

Thus, श्राद्ध touches our psyche at several points. This presents an opportunity to introspect and to tweak our ways. It also acts as a soft reminder to fall in line and motivates us to stay with the good work. While the course of this यज्ञ remains unaltered, an unremitting pursuer will, each time, discover new ideas out of the same recitals. Vedas have always more to be explored.
Persistence with a lifestyle outlined hitherto would gradually but certainly burn all sins and purify one completely enabling him to see the light – Absolute Truth (श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 4-38). Freeing him from the slough of transmigration this light will lead him (in this life and with this body) comfortably on to परम पद – the ultimate summit. One thus becomes his own friend. One who dithers, however, completely misses a God sent opportunity (मनुष्य जन्म) and turns into his own foe.

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥

श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 6-5
Annexe 1 – Introductory prayers

The legendary “पुरुष-सूत” (8.4.17-19) occupies a place of pride in all the four Vedas, epics and other scriptures. Employed in daily rituals it beautifully eulogizes the eternity, virtuosity, pervasiveness and infinite prowess of the Lord portraying an excellent intellectual imagery of creation of the universe. ‘पुरुष’ is not a person in human form and hence the description of various limbs persisted only in a realm of imagination of illustrious poets.

- He is omnipresent. His boundless expanse has no beginning and no end. He has thousand (countless, immeasurable in this context) heads, eyes, arms and limbs. He is the creator. He is the one who presides over the entire universe. Manifesting in myriad forms, He is immanent - in every object, animate or inanimate. The entire creation took only a fraction of his inestimable potency - the rest is illuminating in the firmament. He is the architect of the earth, the cities, days and nights, seasons and originator of all organisms – birds, cows, goats, horses etc. Out of Him mouth, arm, lap and feet emerged a social system of division of labour (should not be mistaken for the man made caste system). So did, sun from eyes, moon from the mind, fire and respire (प्राणवायु) from the mouth, sky from the navel, heaven from the head, earth from the feet and the directions from the ear. The Vedic systems, metrical forms are His designs. In an intellectual imagery of worship and यज्ञ undertaken by the gods, metrical system formed the periphery, पुरुष served as the sacrificial animal, seasons formed the fuel, months, sun, moon and the three worlds
were fuel sticks. Even a contemplation of His worship lends holiness and godhood. Such a deliberation places mortals on a path of evolution.

- An adulation of विश्वेदेवा follows (8.7.15-16). It is believed that one who meditates on them fervently and peacefully will attain strong will, riches and will be free from all hardships. The wishes embedded therein are: may अग्नि to whom we make offerings and worship bless us with eminence and success in our यज्ञ; may these divinities shield us from sins and grant good health, affluence and fame; may the environment be conducive to us; may our desires be fulfilled; may six all powerful goddesses bestow upon us riches and worthy lineage; may अग्नि and सोम guard us, wipe out our enemies; may सवित्र safe guard both the यज्ञ and its performer; may the mighty इन्द्र facilitate completion of the यज्ञ and grant all round progress; may 8 वसु 11 रुद्र and 12 आदित्य make us more resilient and erudite.

- Another set of prayers begin with एकदमान सोम (7.1.15). He is very generous in rewarding his wards, permeating happiness and swaying them away from misdeeds. May मित्रा, वरुण and आर्यस (children of अदिति) fortify every direction, shield us from the enemies and navigate us comfortably to a world free from hurdles, sins, misery and struggle (8.7.13). We beseech splendidly brilliant अग्नि, रुद्र and इन्द्र to guard us and bestow painless transmigration into a world free from all maladies. Just as He liberated a white coloured cow from the clutches of विश्वाबसु may विश्वेदेवा hold disentangle us from all wrongdoings and may अग्नि bless us with long life (3.7.14). We
eulogize the One who manifests in many forms, the One who represents the ultimate ‘reality’ and the One who provides light, air and water. We seek acquittal from our transgression (caused by our ignorance) (5.6.11).

Annexe 2 – Chronicle of mantras

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R.</th>
<th>Mantra</th>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>Eulogy / Supplication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.3.8</td>
<td>पवमान सोमः</td>
<td>May He purify every material and everyone involved in this यज्ञ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3.6</td>
<td>नद्यः</td>
<td>Extolling their virtues, we implore waters from holy rivers, tributaries and lakes to flow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.4.34</td>
<td>भूदेरी</td>
<td>Let us exalt the One who protects, nourishes and enriches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5.14</td>
<td>सूर्यः</td>
<td>Aroma of these plants would banish seen/unseen creatures, protect us from all diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>वरुण</td>
<td>May He banish all our sins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.5.11</td>
<td>ओपधि</td>
<td>Munificence of बृहस्पति would yield fruits that will annihilate all ailments caused by our sinful deeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.7.23</td>
<td>अप्नि</td>
<td>He dazzles in a golden spot i.e. in the sky manifesting as Sun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.1.3</td>
<td>यूपः</td>
<td>In a ज्ञान यज्ञ, a clean heart is a post to which Lord is secured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>सोम</td>
<td>A special gift that appeases पितृ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.8.4</td>
<td>पूपन्</td>
<td>Protect us from our enemies who cast their net far and wide. Like the trees that provide shelter to the birds, provide fruits, flowers and shade to a passer-by, we provide shelter and sustenance to many.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.4.23</td>
<td>मरुतः</td>
<td>A virtuous act is being performed by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Sanskrit</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.3.39</td>
<td>अग्नि</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Astute, honourable Agni accepts oblation, blazes brilliantly and spreads lustre all around.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.6.31</td>
<td>इन्द्र</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let us sing in a chorus praising Him. May wholesome soma juice satiate Him. May riches be showered on us &amp; demoniac enemies desolated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>ब्राह्मण</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A repository of all wealth, a boon giver and a cruiser in a turbulent ocean of life – annihilate poverty, banish all darkness, disease, fear, and death.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.6.5</td>
<td>आपः</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May the water be propitious and congenial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.6.17</td>
<td>पितरः</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beseeching पितृ (they are insightful) from all the three worlds to be generous and devour the offerings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.4.5</td>
<td>अग्नि रक्षोहा</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pleading to drive-away all the evil spirits brutes, beasts etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.2.18</td>
<td>अग्नि इन्द्र सोमन्</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May अग्नि manifesting as fire, air and sun, controlling and cleansing all purify us; may इन्द्र and other heavenly forces purify us; may सोमन् flourish and pour all the virtuous juices into this यज्ञ.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.8.15-16</td>
<td>विश्वेदेवा</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Imploring विश्वेदेवा to arrive from all directions, accept दर्शन जन्म रक्षो to be favourably disposed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.6.22</td>
<td>अग्नि</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We implore अग्नि to escort पितृदेवाता</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.6.17</td>
<td>पितरः</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Salutations to all our पितृ who await oblations to be made at this यज्ञ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>विष्णु</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|      |          | Shield this यज्ञ from wicked eyes and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Vedanta</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.1.22</td>
<td>इन्द्र: An appeal to destroy the terrible ghost and protect this यज्ञ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.4.22</td>
<td>अग्नि: May He blaze intensely to burn away our sins and destroy opponents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.5.32</td>
<td>अग्नि: May He safeguard this यज्ञ and everyone in the family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.5.9</td>
<td>कैश्यानर: Omnipresent Lord who is in full blaze, presides over all the three worlds now accepts our offerings through the ब्राह्मण.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.2.7</td>
<td>विष्णु: May the One who conquered the entire earth with his three giant steps ensure the success of this यज्ञ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.2.7</td>
<td>विष्णु: The dust of His feet that fell as He was traversing consecrated the three worlds. We seek His pardon for our digression, if any, during this यज्ञ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.2.4</td>
<td>विश्वेदेवा: We entreat Gods (11 in each of the 3 worlds. 33 or 33000 in all) to arrive in unison and accept our offerings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.6.19</td>
<td>पितर: We implore जात्रेद अग्नि to lead this यज्ञ. He knows all our ancestors wherever they may be – even unknown to us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.6.3</td>
<td>इन्द्र: A plea to grant new fortitude and rejuvenate us after this long drill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>8.1.19</td>
<td>विश्वेदेवा: An appeal to grant us longevity and guide through noble deeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>पितर: May the ancestors bless us with riches and worthy children. We vow to follow their valuable directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>7.6.19</td>
<td>पितर: May the Lord grant an appropriate status to them as per His resolve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>7.2.29</td>
<td>पवमान सोम: May वरुण provide essentials for our यज्ञ and may सोम protect it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.2.7</td>
<td>विष्णु</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>5.4.5</td>
<td>सविता</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>5.1.20</td>
<td>रथगोपा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>8.3.28</td>
<td>सूर्या</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.2.14</td>
<td>विश्वेदेवा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>5.6.24</td>
<td>विष्णु</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annexe 3: Esoteric Overtones
Prayers and recitations have, thus far, been seen only in a limited functional ritualistic context. But those who are inquisitive and diligent would notice several veiled but focal messages and spiritual overtones.

परोक्ष प्रिया हि हि देवः (ऐतरेर्ग्रां 1.3.14). Divinities cherish indirect or implicit ways (e.g. receive oblations through an agent i.e. अध्री) Thus, sages veritably communicate through codes, symbols, numbers, simile and rhetoric. There are puzzles and mysteries. A few thoughts emerging from the foregoing are being considered for further breakdown of the narration:
• पुरुष सूत्र is a beautiful imagery of a यज्ञ occurring only in the mind and spirit of the sages. It is a peaceful exercise diligently pursued in discharge of duties assigned by the Creator. Asceticism is the fire while jealousy, desires, hate, anger serve as fuel in this यज्ञ and realisation of the Truth is the यज्ञन्द्शष्टि. This unique experience is what is portrayed in these verses
(a) पुरुष is not a terrible-looking entity with countless limbs. It describes His immanence. He enables us to breathe, our eyes to see, our ears to hear. Thus, He operates through every object of His creation.
(b) यज्ञ refers to the dynamics of creation; fires to the divine Spirit and trending upward; ghee to the lustre and vital energy. (c) The depiction that the universe emerged out of His corpus is ingenious. The emergence of Sun from His eyes is significant for, it is He who drives away our ignorance and enlightens us. Likewise reference to moon affirms the correlation between our mood swings and the passage of the moon. Further, it is He knows our mind best. Again, it is the breath of the Lord that has filled the universe with vital air. Imbedded in every living organism as पञ्चप्राण, He regulates our health and determines our life span (d) Emergence of a अऽक्ष्य from the mouth is symbolic. Verbal communication is critical for one whose primary occupation is learning and propagation of Vedic knowledge. Analogy of राजरो (warrior) to the forearms of the Lord should also be seen in the context of skill sets which performance specific duties demand in a well-defined social system (e) साध्य, सन्त and देवता represent क्रियाशक्ति, ज्ञात्सक्ति and
इच्छाशक्ति – combination of resolve, physical and intellectual powers (f) सस परिशि implies that there is no world sans the ब्रह्मन्. Each of the seven worlds is under His command.

- There is a reference to यूपः (see page 46–R8). This mantra is recited while consecrating and adorning a sacrificial post. Vedic literature describes यूप as an 8 angled device as powerful as क्रायुध - a thunderbolt. One can construe that यूप is a अस्त्र and is intended to destroy enemies who have plagued our heart. A worshipper ties down विष्णु (known as धर्मयूप) to it, leaving no room for any evil thoughts.

- त्रिसृष्टिः which literally means 3 beautiful wings refers to the Trinity. Their Creator is सुपण्व। सुपण्व also means a pool abounding with lotuses. The reckonings are: (a)He, like the wings of the bird, averts our downfall (b)He is surrounded by seven sages (lotuses) who can expiate sins (c)our lotus heart is His divine seat and that (d) this earth has myriad pools with His imageries bedecked in innumerable lotuses.

- Numbers 4, 4, 2, 5, 2 symbolise Lord Vishnu – see page 8.

Esoteric expressions like these can be cracked and deciphered only by an adept preceptor (note the counsel in श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 2.63)

**Annexe 4: अभिश्रवण mantras**

- It is customary to recite त्रिसृष्टिः (तैत्तिरिय आरण्यक) to reinforce the भोजन यज्ञ. The three supplications are: (a) grant us intellectual powers and an environment that is conducive to build such prowess, (b) hold us free from heinous turpitudes - killing the foetus, virtuous and the brave and
(c) enable us to understand the self, the purpose of our life and ways and means of obtaining liberation from दुःस्र्प्न i.e. desolations of material life and the cycle of rebirth. See प्राणाशिर्होत्र & अन्न प्रक्रिय sections.

The word मधु is repeatedly used as a part of श्रद्धा chant and अभिभवण।

A student expects (a) enchanting मेधा शक्तिः (b) captivating तेजस् and ओजस् – brilliance and vivacity (c) mellifluous relations with his guru and (d) brotherhood with fellows.

A कर्त्ता desires that (a) he remains engrossed in adorable यज्ञ (b) oblations remain clean, pure and delicious (c) ब्राह्मण finds the food delightful (d) the mantras are recited tunefully and melodically and (e) the ब्राह्मण is put in comfort while eating.

A devout जिन्दासु pursues (a) enchanting मधु विच्छा that can carry him closer to माधव (b) ability to make enchanting स्तुति and lovely offerings into fire and (c) मधुरवाणि – persistently pleasing newscast, polite and amiable speech.

- श्रद्धासूत see page 8-9
- राक्षोग्नसूत has assailing enemies as the central theme.
- अन्नसूत – recitation of an assemblage from various sections of ऋग्र्ेद is intended to drive home the significance of virtuous deeds.
- References to the Lord, hallowed centres like Ganges (पुण्यक्षेत्र, तीथक्षेत्र) are made. They banish all miseries, satiate thirst for knowledge and pave the way to ‘liberation’.
- A few couplets are recited and restated (see page 5)
• A story (हरिवंश, पद्मपुराण, गरुड पुराण) of seven children who being unable to bear starvation during famine, killed their guru’s cow and ate the meat is recalled. These children presumed that they will be pardoned if they perform a श्राद्ध and offer the meat to पितृदेवता before partaking it. Yet, they had to endure the anguish on three scores – stealing guru’s cow, falsification and eating forbidden food. In the subsequent rebirths, their immense faith in and adherence to Vedic mandates wiped out their sins and earned them Lord’s munificence.

**Annexe 5 अन्न प्रक्रिया:**

One can discern repeated references to ‘अन्न’ (it includes everything that we eat, sip, lick and chew) in different contexts. Put on a broad canvas of a ज्ञान यज्ञ, The Lord is immanent in everything created by Him. He is both ‘अन्न’ (one that is eaten) and अन्नाद (one who eats). This astonishing and adept creator has His own way of ensuring food security. The universe is thus replete with this ‘अन्न’ – ‘अन्नाद’ relation. One serves as food to the other - water is food for the vegetation which, in turn, is the food for an animal and so on.

Like every other living organism, eat we should and live we should. However, in Lord’s dispensation human beings are endowed with unique attributes, faculties and mission to be accomplished. These present wonderful opportunities – to live like a noble man, experience delight and permeate joy all around. On this pathway, food serves as a vehicle.

The implication for one born as a ब्राह्मण is that (a) it should be सात्विक - one that strengthens physical
abilities as well as mental faculties (कर्मन्त्रिय and ज्ञानेन्त्रिय)

(b) one should be gifted with भोज्याभोज्य विवेक i.e. cognitive faculty - know what to eat, when to eat, where to eat, how much to eat, in whose comradeship to eat. While excessive restraint would be tormenting अन्तरात्मन् i.e. inner soul, overindulgence would impact functionality (c) one should ideally partake only यज्ञन्द्शष्ट – nectar left-over after performing पञ्च महायज्ञ - a reference to स्वाहा and स्वधा is indicative of this (see page 6) (d) one should have the desire as well as the ability to eat, relish and digest (good health and peace of mind).

The course which it takes is presented in the diagram:

1. Food supports प्राणधारण – reinforcing, maintaining and prolonging life.
2. प्राणधारण helps build energy level (बल) required for the rigorous, long journey.
3. Stamina (बल) or vigour renders तपस् - self-restraint, endurance, atonement and penance possible.
4. Penance (तपस्) and asceticism generates allegiance, conscientiousness and diligence (श्रद्धा) required to pursue Vedic education.
5. Absolute belief breeds मेधा - ability to assimilate the doctrines presented by the preceptor in a right perspective.
6. Grasp develops मनीष - ability to discriminate (right and wrong, good and bad, real and unreal, eternal and ephemeral) making one wise and prudent Providence helps मनन - reflection and meditation.
7. Meditation and constant deliberation leads to शान्ति - peace, firmness, tranquillity and serenity.
8. Composure and equanimity (शान्ति) trains चित्त –
clarity of thought, ideas and vision - a conduit for the flow of knowledge.

9. चित्र leads to स्मृति – regular recollection of precepts and firmness of thoughts and beliefs.

10. As स्मृति keeps propelling and recoiling causing स्मार - a cascade.

11. The gush ripens into know-how i.e. विज्ञान – gateway to the world of enlightenment.

12. Know-how (विज्ञान) empowers one to conquer and experience a state of ecstasy and eternal joy (आत्मज्ञान).
Annexe 6 महालय श्राद्ध:

Following changes are to be incorporated while performing महालय श्राद्ध during the पितृपक्ष:

- धूररलोचन are the विशेषदेवता
- 12 paternal and maternal forefathers (द्वादश पितृ) are offered पिण्ड as per पार्वण system i.e. group of three in the hierarchy (e.g. father, fathers’ father and father’s grandfather) mentioning the गोत्र and name of each of them.
  1. father, paternal grandfather and great grandfather (3) and mother, paternal grandmother and great grandmother (3)
  2. mother’s father, her paternal grandfather, great grandfather (3) and mother’s mother, her mother’s paternal grandmother and great grandmother (3).

- In the case of all others, एकोद्धष्ट (directed at one) system is followed. पिण्ड is offered to a person specifying his/her गोत्र and name. His or her spouse and children are conjoined. This group includes:
  1. Step mother and her children.
  2. Spouse and children.
  3. Brothers of the father, mother and the self.
  4. Sisters of the father, mother and the self.
  5. Father and mother of the spouse.
  6. Teacher, disciple, close friend, well-wisher and others.

A ‘धमव पिण्ड’ is dedicated in each of the four corners for those who died before taking birth; those who departed without descendants or spurned, discarded by the children; those inhabitants of the three worlds who have no access to food or water; those unfortunate ones bereft of Vedic refinement during their lifetime.
and/or upon their death; all those others in distress or deprivation and labouring to attain liberation. To all of them offerings are made affectionately and gratefully this day with a wish that it may last long and proliferate profusely. There is no trace of selfishness or egoism here. There is a musing of (सर्वार्थ चिन्तन, विशाल वृद्धि) common good (see page 7-8) dominating every thought, speech and action.