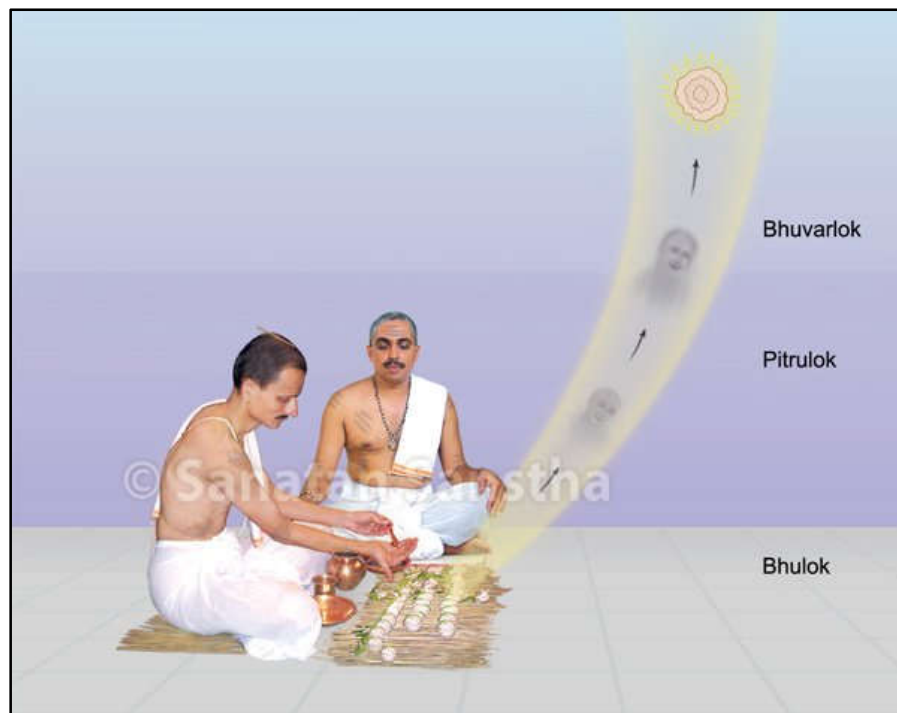


9th Episode – Importance of Shradh

Following 8th episode of “*The fundamentals of Life and Physical Life*”, towards Maha Kumbhabhisekam of Panching Gua Charas Jalalingeswarar Shivan temple, with good intention and thoughts for all devotees, the following write-up is prepared.

As discussed in the previous 8th episode, Quote “*There are many rituals to see that you can somehow put a drop of sweetness into such a non-discerning mind*”; hence it is importance for us to understand the rituals associated with death – Shradh.

As such, in this 9th episode, we will look into details of Shradh. It is important to understand what happens to life once it is left our physical body - **Annamaya Kosha**, and how it is important to nurture as much as pleasantness as possible.



Let's understand the term '*Shradh* or *Shraddha*' (special rites performed for the departed ancestors). Some terminologies which is pertinent to understand as follows;

Pitar – When an individual dies, upon performing the *shradh* rites his/her subtle-body gets freed from pretayoni (species of the dead) and it gets position in the subtle-region called *Pitru lok*. Only then it assumed the status of a *pitar*.

Parvana – After performing *Sapindikaran shradh* (*Shradh* performed a day before the first death anniversary of the individual), the soul that has assumed the state of *pitar* now joins other *pitars* and then gets further categorised as *parvana*. He becomes eligible for receiving *Parvana shradh*. This *shradh* is addressed to the past three generations of the pitars.

Since the **spiritually potent mantras recited during the *shradh* rites** have the **subtle power** of providing momentum to the subtle-bodies of *pitars*, they can progress to a higher subtle-region of existence after the rites have been performed as seen in the figure above. Bharatiya culture says that, just as we serve our parents and close relatives when they are alive as part of abiding by our Dharma, we have certain duties unto them after their death. The *shradh* rites provide us with an excellent opportunity to fulfil these duties and repay our debts unto the *pitars*.

The *shradh* rites are necessary so that the journey after death of our parents, who have taken our utmost care during our childhood, becomes comfortable and without any distress, and that they acquire *sadgati* (i.e. momentum for moving to the next higher region). If *shradh* is not performed, the

desires of the *pitars* (i.e. deceased ancestors) remain unfulfilled. Negative energies make easy victims of such desire-riddled *pitars* and then, enslave them. In all likelihood, they then use them to cause distress to their own family members. By performing *shradh*, we get relieved from the distress caused by the *pitars*, and our life on earth becomes comfortable.

Here are the objectives of performing ***Shradh***

1. Helping through the medium of the *Shradh* rites, the *pitars* who have attained the *Pitru lok* (Region of the *pitars*), gain momentum for their onward journey.
2. Satisfying wishes and desires of the dead from our family lineage who, due to their unfulfilled desires have not gained momentum, meaning, who, instead of moving on to the superior regions are entrapped in the inferior region. Thus, providing momentum to their onward journey.
3. Due to their evil deeds, some *pitars* do not go to *Pitru lok*. Due to their *karmas* they enter the ghost species. To relieve them from that species, the *Shradh* rites are performed.

Now let's look at 3 historically established stages of *Shradh* as follows;

A. Agnoukarana

During the period of *Rugveda*, *pitars* were worshiped by offering *samidha* (wooden sticks) and *pinda* (rice balls used during *shradh*) into the sacrificial fire.

B. Pindadan or Pindapuja (Offering of pinda)

The process for *pindadan* is explained in *Yajurveda*, *Bramhans*, *Shrout* and *Gruhyasutra*. The rite was put into practice during the period of *Gruhyasutra*.

Information on the period when the *Pindapuja* commenced is documented in the Holy text *Mahabharat* – *Varahadev*, the Incarnation of *Shrivishnu*, introduced the entire concept of *shradh* to the world. He created three *pindas* from His molar tooth and placed them on *darbha* (A type of grass used in rites and rituals involving sacrificial fires and rites for the departed souls such as *shradh*) placed in the southern direction. *Varahadev* then advised, 'Let the 3 *pindas* be considered to represent the father, the grandfather and the great-grandfather'. He then performed the ritualistic worship of the *pindas* using sesame seeds as mentioned in the scriptures, and then suddenly vanished. Thus, began the worship of *pinda* for the *pitars* as per the guidance of *Varahadev*.

C. Offering food to Brahmas

During the post-*Gruhyasutra* and *Shruti-Smriti* period, offering food to *Brahmans* (Priests) was considered mandatory and became an important part of *shradh* rites.

D. Combination of all the three stages

In the current era, all the three stages mentioned above are included within the *Parvana shradh*. The scriptures prescribe that the householders should perform the *shradh* rites as their duty. Some of these offering is always performed during *Homam* held in *Jalalingam* temple and each devotee should understand the significant and science behind this so that it helps to elevate ourselves in many different dimensions.

Shiva Shambo
Om Nama Siva Ya Om
Help Ever Hurt Never
Service to Society is Service to Almighty
Master Ir. Sivabalan - Temple Trustee
19th Jan 2020