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Each of us is born with three debts of karma. We owe a debt to the Gods and Goddesses, which we discharge by making this world a better place because of our having been here. We owe a debt to our ancestors, which we discharge by respecting the elderly the way we will want to be respected when we are old, and by teaching the young people the way we want this world to become. The third debt is to the Gurus, which we discharge by living in accordance with the wisdom that they taught us.

Where we are today, what we are doing today, what are our achievements and aspirations, all in part are predicated upon the path that our ancestors have prepared for us. Each of us took birth with a certain destiny, and a propensity to fulfill that destiny. We took birth into a specific family that created an environment most conducive for us to become what it is that God intended.

Many of our families inspired us to become what we are by showing us what we might not want to become. By both positive and negative reinforcement, our families prepared our paths, just as we are preparing the paths of those who will come after us.

Therefore, we want to say, Thank You. We who like where we are and what we are doing, want to demonstrate our respect and appreciation by asking for blessings from the preceding generations. These mantras communicate that attitude.

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Tarṇa

Ancestral offerings

ॐ कुरुक्षेत्र गया गङ्गा प्रभासे पुष्कराणि च ।

ये तीर्थतानि पुण्याणि तार्पणकाले भवन्ति च ॥

**oṃ kurukṣetra gayā gaṅgā prabhāse puṣkarāṇi ca
ye tīrthatāni puṇyāṇi tārṇakāle bhavānti ca**

Oṃ Kurukṣetra, Gayā, Gaṅgā, Prabhāsa and Puṣkara: these are the meritorious places of pilgrimage that are to be remembered at the time of offering to ancestors.

यमाय धर्मराजाय मृत्यवे चान्तकाय च ।

वैवस्वताय कालाय सर्वभूतक्षयाय च ॥

**yamāya dharmarājāya mṛtyave cāntakāya ca
vaivasvatāya kālāya sarvabhūtakṣayāya ca**

I bow to Yamā, to the King of Dharma, to Death, to the Inner Being; to He who is the Universe, to Time, to He who causes the destruction of all existence.

ॐ पिता स्वर्गः पिता धर्मः पिता हि परमं तपः ।

पितरि प्रीतिमापन्ने प्रीयन्ते सर्वदेवताः ॥

**oṃ pitā svargaḥ pitā dharmaḥ pitā hi paramaṃ tapaḥ
pitari prītimāpanne prīyante sarvadevatāḥ**

Oṃ My ancestors are my heaven. My ancestors are my Dharma. My ancestors are my highest Tapas. If my ancestors are satisfied, all the Gods will be satisfied.

ॐ आशिषो मे प्रदीयन्तां पितरः करुणामयाः ।

वदाः सन्ततयो नित्यं वर्द्धन्तां बान्धवा मम ॥

**oṃ āśiṣo me pradīyantāṃ pitarāḥ karuṇāmayāḥ
vadāḥ santatayo nityaṃ
varddhantāṃ bāndhavā mama**

Oṃ Oh compassionate ancestors, bless me. Always speak words of peace to me and release me from all bondage.