

# Pitra Doshā

by [Peter Dreyer](#) (May 2023)



*Le Bûcher de Montségur*, Jacques Fauché, 1960

*Do you remember an Inn,  
Miranda?*

*Do you remember an Inn?*

. . .

*And the fleas that tease in the High Pyrenees,  
And the wine that tasted of tar?*

—Hilaire Belloc, “Tarantella” (1929)

**Mount Montségur’s also** in the Pyrenees,  
to which ten thousand Frenchmen came one day  
asked by the pope to light a holy fire  
in the thirteenth century; no stakes  
were necessary—when to the field led

the *perfecti* climbed freely on the pyre.  
Damnation take our ancestors, brutes  
that they were! I'm not sorry they are dead!

I read Belloc's poem at my high school  
in Africa (it was an all-white school—  
they never got my views in that regard).  
He favored, it seems, freedom as a rule,  
but required cock and balls to vote, the fool:  
blot out his name, then—cancel the bad bard!

Note: On Mount Montségur, see  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege\\_of\\_Monts%C3%A9gur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Monts%C3%A9gur) . For  
the Cathar *perfecti*,  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathar\\_Perfect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathar_Perfect). The Hindu term  
*Pitra Dosha* refers to karmic afflictions inherited from one's  
ancestors—see, e.g.,  
<https://vedics.in/pitra-dosha-curse-remedies>. The Franco-  
British writer Hilaire Belloc (1870–1953), the author of  
*Cautionary Tales for Children*, among them “Jim, Who Ran Away  
from His Nurse, and Was Eaten by a Lion” and “Matilda, Who  
Told Lies and Was Burned to Death,” a member of the Women's  
National Anti-Suffrage League, campaigned against women being  
enfranchised in the early years of the twentieth century.

## [Table of Contents](#)

**Peter Richard Dreyer** is a South African American writer. He is  
the author of *A Beast in View* (London: André Deutsch), *The  
Future of Treason* (New York: Ballantine), *A Gardener Touched  
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McCann & Geoghegan; rev. ed., Berkeley: University of  
California Press; new, expanded ed., Santa Rosa, CA: Luther

Burbank Home & Gardens), *Martyrs and Fanatics: South Africa and Human Destiny* (New York: Simon & Schuster; London: Secker & Warburg), and most recently the novel *Isacq* (Charlottesville, VA: Hardware River Press, 2017).

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