
YAJURVEDĪYA KĀLATRAYA SANDHYĀVANDANAM

- An elaborate introduction to Sandhyāvandana : what it is, how and why it should be practised.

and

- The original Sanskrit verses, supplemented by transliteration, meanings and notes in English.

by

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'Yajurvediya Kālatraya Sandhyāvandanam' – a commentary in English by
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INTRODUCTION

सन्ध्याहीनोऽशुचिर्नित्यम्
 अनर्हस्सर्व कर्मसु ।
 यदन्यत् कुरुते कर्म
 न तस्य फलभाक् भवेत् ॥

Sandhyāhīnoḥ aśucirnityam
Anarhassarva karmasu |
Yadanyat kurute karma
Na tasya phalabhāk bhavet ||

[He who does not perform *Sandhyāvandana* is ever impure and is thus rendered unfit to perform any of the vedik rites – the *nitya* (daily) and the *naimittika* (occasional) duties, enjoined by the scriptures. If, however, he did perform these duties, once in a way, in spite of the self-inflicted impurity due to the non-performance of *Sandhyāvandana* regularly, the said performance will not yield any result and, therefore, it will be a mere exercise in futility].

Against this background, it should be clear that *Sandhyāvandana* is the gateway to the domain of vedik rites and that one acquires the eligibility to perform the vedik rites only through the performance of *Sandhyāvandana*. As a matter of fact, all our *pūrvācāryas* (ancient preceptors), noted for their profound knowledge of the scriptural texts and exemplary code of conduct,

have held that *Sandhyāvandana* has to be performed at the appropriate timings as *Bhagavadājñayā Kaiṅkaryā*, that is, as a matter of service rendered to God (*Bhagavān*) by way of obeying His command, which leaves obviously no option to the practicant to skip it as it would be tantamount to disobeying His command, inviting His wrath and displeasure. Well, commands are meant to be obeyed. In '*Viṣṇu Dharma*' (6-31), Lord Viṣṇu's writ runs as follows :

श्रुतिः स्मृतिः ममैवाज्ञा
यस्यामुल्लङ्घ्य वर्तते ।
आज्ञाच्छेदी मम द्रोही
मद्भक्तोपि न वैष्णवः ॥

Śrutih Smṛtiḥ mamaivājñā
Yasyāmullaṅghya vartate |
Ājñācchedī mama drohī
Madbhakto api na vaiṣṇavaḥ ||

[The vedas (*Śrutih*) and the treatises thereunder (*Smṛtiḥ*) convey my commands. Whoever violates them, that is, goes against the scriptural dictates, commits treason. Even if he be my devotee, he is by-no-means a Vaiṣṇava]

Lord Kṛṣṇa has pronounced clearly in His 'Song Celestial' (*Bhagavadgīta* – 16-23), as follows : "He who casts aside my commands in the form of the vedas and the ancillary texts and treads the path, dictated by his own sweet will and pleasure, does not attain success or happiness in this world and there is, therefore, no question of his attaining the highest goal on the yonder side".

What is Sandhyāvandana ?

- (a) The superficial meaning would be the worship of a goddess, named Sandhyā, a minor deity.
- (b) Some hold that this refers to the worship of the Sun at day-break, the meeting point (*Sandhyā*) of night and day, and again at sunset, the meeting point (another *Sandhyā*) of day and night.
- (c) In another sense, *Sandhyopāsana* could connote the *Jīvātmā* – *Paramātmā* combine (*Sandhyā*), the *Jīva* (individual soul) constituting, as it were, the body of the *Paramātmā*, the Super-Soul, residing inside the former (in the heart-region) in all its brilliance – a perpetual day, the sun that never sets to rise again.

It could be safely asserted that the Ṛṣis of yore who were steeped in *Dhyānayoga* for hundreds of years at a stretch must have been engaged only in the blissful *Sandhyopāsana* – referred to in (c) above. Neither (a) nor (b) could hold good in the case of the aspirants for *Mokṣa* (*Mumukṣus*), seeking emancipation from the material shackles and mundane moorings, who shall not worship any but the Supreme Brahman, Lord Nārāyaṇa (also known as Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva) whose sole prerogative it is to grant *Mokṣa*. Looking at the vociferous declaration of the vedas and upaniṣadik texts that the Sun, Wind, time etc. are all subject to the absolute control of the Supreme Lord, propitiation of the Sun at *Sandhyā*, the point of time at which night departs and day sets in and vice-versa, would not be relevant. The Sun, Wind etc. function in the manner each one does with a due sense of discipline, awe and fear of the Supreme Lord, the sole Ordainer of the universe and its functioning :- “भीषास्मात् वातः पवते भीषोदेति सूर्यः” *Bhīṣāsmāt vātaḥ pavate bhīṣodeti sūryaḥ*. Actually, all the mantras, contained in *Sandhyāvandana*, denote only the Supreme Lord, as made out by the learned commentators, the most outstanding being Śrīmannārāyaṇa Yatīndrar, a *jīyar*, the second in the pontifical lineage of the Ahobila mutt, that doyen, Sudaraśana Bhaṭṭar (*Śrutaparakāśikācārya*) who has bequeathed an illuminating commentary in Sanskrit, Tirumalai Anantān Piḷḷai and Kunnattūr Ayyan Swami. Vidyāraṇya and Vaidyanātha Dīkṣitar have also written commentaries in the light of *Advaita*.

It has to be emphasised over again that, in terms of obeying the Lord’s command cum service (*Kainkarya*), the *Sandhyāvandana* has to be performed thrice a day at the appropriate timings and cannot be given up. The appropriate timings are : Just before Sun-rise; when the Sun is at the meridian (noon, which denotes the meeting points of the forenoon and afternoon); and at Sun-set, before the Sun sinks into the horizon and goes out of sight.

The chanting of the vedik mantras is prohibited on certain specific days of each fortnight and when under pollution due to the demise of a blood relation or the birth of a child in the family. *Sandhyāvandana* has, however, to be performed throughout one’s life, without exception, although the latter has several vedik mantras incorporated in it. This is a *nityakarma* (daily duty) enjoined by Brahman on the *traivarnikas* – the Brāhmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas.

At this stage, the reader might, however, point-out why the mandate of performing the *Sandhyāvandana* throughout one's life is given the go-by by the Advaita sanyāsis who remove their tuft and *yajñopavīta* (sacred thread) on their taking to the holy order. It is, indeed, a strange phenomenon. The Advaitins do chant the vedas and impart them to their disciples. They also go through the ceremonial bath and perform *Sandhyāvandana*, *yajña* etc., in the light of their *varṇa* (caste), and *āśrama* (station in life) and scriptural dictates. And yet, when they take to *sanyāsa*, they give up the tuft and the sacred thread and with that, the performance of *Sandhyāvandana* as well, proclaiming their monistic identity with Brahman, as reflected by the *Eka Daṇḍa* (single staff) they carry about with them. The why and the wherefore of these marked deviations by the Advaitins and the reasoned repudiation thereof will be found in *Śrī Bhāṣya* (Saint Rāmānujācārya's commentary on Brahma Sūtras), in the *Laghu Pūrvapakṣa* and the *Laghu Siddhānta* respectively. This will not be dilated further here. However, the Śrī Vaiṣṇava sanyāsis do not give up the tuft, *yajñopavīta* and *Sandhyāvandana* performance.

And now, about the *Prapannas* who look upon God as their sole refuge and do not resort to any 'means' other than His sweet, spontaneous grace for their redemption and attainment of His lotus feet in the yonder heaven, their ultimate goal. It is incumbent on them also to perform the *nitya* and *naimittika* rites as long as they live, with this fundamental difference that, while in their pre-surrender period, they did all these as the means for their spiritual evolution and attainment, in the post-surrender period they perform these rites as mere service (*kaiṅkarya*), obedience to the Lord's dictates in the shape of Śāstrik decrees and injunctions – *ājñākaiṅkarya*.

In the final say (*Carama Śloka*) of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa in the *Gīta*, propounding the doctrine of surrender to His loving grace, looking upon Him as the sole refuge, the Lord did not counsel giving up all the erstwhile duties, as such, and remaining idle but emphasised the need for their performance as a matter of religious duty in a spirit of service to Him and not as a means of attaining Him. Earlier too, the Lord had emphasised the need for doing all that one does in a spirit of total dedication, attributing everything to Him as the Sole Ordainer, with the stress on the 'Service' (*Bhagavadājñayā kaiṅkarya*) aspect of the performance of the rites. It would logically follow that *Sandhyāvandana*, as one such inviolable rite, could be skipped only when one is engaged in the direct service of the Lord in His iconic (*arcā*) manifestation which assumes over-riding importance and not under any other circumstances.

The form and content of *Sandhyāvandana* vary according to the particular veda *Śākhā* (Ṛg, Yajur, and Sāma) to which one traditionally belongs. Even so, there is some difference in mantras, chanted by Vaiṣṇavas and Smārthās. Again, among those born in the three *varṇas*, namely, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, who are eligible to recite vedas and to perform *Sandhyāvandana*, the mantras and procedures vary.

It is also imperative that the chanters of the vedas and mantras in the *Sandhyāvandana* should know the meanings thereof. Failure to do so would not only render their chantings ineffective but also reduce them to the ridiculous position of the donkey, carrying on its back loads of sandal bags and bundles of saffron, which is incapable of enjoying the fragrance emanating therefrom. Further, it is the ignorance of the purport of these mantras and the imperative necessity of chanting them which has led to the present impasse, a good many having given up performing *Sandhyāvandana* altogether. Particularly, in the present age of reasoning when the robust (implicit) faith of yesteryears has lost its hold on the people, they would want to know the why and wherefore of the traditional observance. Unless it is brought home to them in the manner now sought to be done, they will have no hesitation in dismissing it all as mere superstition, not worthy of serious attention. It is, therefore, absolutely essential for the chanters to know the purport of the relevant mantras so as to infuse in them the requisite sense of devotion and stern mental application. The first of the Ālvārs (in the chronological sequence) in his '*Mūtal Tiruvandādi*' – stanza 33, has just ridiculed those who perform *Sandhyāvandana* without due concentration of the mind and get distracted by surroundings in between mechanical mumblings, a routine exercise, shorn of devotion. The desired concentration could be ensured only if the chanters know what they chant and why they do it, apart from the basic sense of devotion to the religious duty enjoined on them, a fundamental requisite.

Why should Sandhyāvandana be performed ?

In the present age, a good many have given up the practice of *Sandhyāvandana* altogether after a token performance in the initial period and stilled their conscience also, ably supported by the indifference of the elders around. What is even worse, cutting a divergent path these persons, the grown-up among them, would even argue that the practice in question does not fit in with the fast-moving life-pattern of the present day, with its social and economic stress making alarming inroads into the leisurely

religious pursuits of old. By way of giving a sop to their conscience they would even assert that : (a) the vedik mantras, couched in Sanskrit with a distinct vocabulary and grammar of its own, have no relevance to a world where the knowledge of Sanskrit is confined to a limited few, a microscopic minority, (b) the prayer to the omniscient God transcends the limitations of language and He could be heard by anyone speaking in any language, and above all, (c) there is nothing like the language of silence, the silent communion with the Lord, the meaningful rapport of a longing soul with its Creator, ever alert to and solicitous of the former's uplift. This would be on a par with the vain boast of those who would repudiate the worship of a personal God, going all the way to a temple on the ground that God is right inside them and they do meditate on Him in their own way, though not in the conventional form, and according to their own convenience. Naturally, it sounds hollow and pretentious, if not fallacious to the traditional devotee who doggedly follows in the footsteps of the eminent elders, the great saints, seers, and preceptors who set the pace for them, long long ago, but for whom, we, at this distance of time, with our meagre knowledge of the Divine and the natural constraints of vocal expressions, will be little better than dumb creatures. Of course, one need not dispute or disagree with the view that silent prayer, straight from the heart, as against the mechanical articulation of the mantras in an unfamiliar dialect, the more so when the chanting is not open to one and all, is good in its own way. Nevertheless, it has to be reiterated that the practice of *Sandhyāvandana* in the very form in which it has been enjoined by Brahman – ‘जगत्कर्तुः महेश्वरस्य दिव्याज्ञा’ *Jagatkartruḥ Maheṣvarasya divyājñā* (the divine command of the Supreme Lord who ushered in this universe) – is indispensable and inviolable and nothing will please Him better. The practicers are indeed free to adopt, in addition, any other practices as fit in with their mental attitudes, provided that they are not repugnant to the basic faith. Any exercise of this kind can only be cumulative and not alternative.

How Sandhyāvandana can help you

All actions of the men in the material world are result-oriented and it is but natural that the spiritually un-evolved, who do not, as yet, believe in disinterested, selfless service, divested of all thinking in terms of personal gains, would want to know the benefits which would accrue to them through the performance of *Sandhyāvandana* and the ill-effects of its non-performance. As already stated at the outset, here is the command of the Supreme Lord which has to be obeyed, as a matter of course, without

looking for any result as such, even as a dutiful son has the supreme satisfaction of having carried out his father's command and fulfilled his desire without looking beyond that. Even so, it deserves to be noted that '*Manusmṛiti*' points out that the sages who performed *Sandhyāvandana* got their longevity extended enormously. Actually, the *Prāṇāyāma* which is an integral part of *Sandhyāvandana* and which will be explained later in this work, in detail, helps one to hold one's breath and thereby extend one's longevity, literally defying death by deferring its onslaught to a later date (according to Āyurveda, one's longevity is measured by the number of breaths in one's life and not on just time). In several *Smṛtis* also, the benefits accruing to those who perform *Sandhyāvandana* have been enumerated. They are : freedom from disease, long life and all-round prosperity. Above all, the practicants are invested with a special halo (*Brahmatejas*), illumining their faces with ultra-mundane brilliance.

Sandhyāvandana's effect on the Sun

In the course of *Sandhyāvandana*, the practicant offers *arghya*, that is, takes water with both the palms kept open and held together and throws it in the air in the direction of the Sun, uttering the mantra. This is repeated thrice, that is, the oblation is made three times, in all. If, however, the practicant fails to perform it in due time (at the appropriate time indicated earlier), he has to offer one more *arghya* by way of expiation (*prāyaścitta*) for the belated or premature offering. The vedik texts reveal that these *arghyas*, delivered skyward from the palms of the practicants, serve as missiles to quell the multitudes of powerful demons, known as *Mantehars*, the inhabitants of the island *Manteha* who obstruct the diurnal course of the Sun at sun-rise, mid-day and sun-set, and help the Sun move in its orbit, all right. The māntrik force behind the *arghyas*, the psychic energy generated by them, gets transformed into concrete lethal weapons at the other end. There is an endless proliferation of these demons, like bed-bugs, and hence the perpetual need for the *arghyas* in question. Further, the upaniṣadik texts (*Chāndogya 1-6*) declare that the Supreme Lord pervades all things and beings all over the universe and that He is seen inside the Sun as one with golden hue, with a pair of eyes, lovely as the lotus in full bloom (*Ya yeṣā antarāditya hiraṇmayah puruṣo drśyate tasya yathā kapyāsam puṇḍarīkameva akṣiṇi*). But, to the mere astronomer, the Sun is just a ball of fire, and neither he nor the astro-scientist can discern the presence of the Great Creator inside the core of the Sun. As the subject under discussion is a rite falling within the compass of a religion, rooted in the vedas of unquestionable veracity

(authority), it is no good looking askance at it and taking the vedik utterances lightly, entailing a degree of unwarranted scepticism. Again, it may be argued with an air of complacency or insouciance, by no means justifiable, by those who have given up the performance of *Sandhyāvandana* since long that the Sun's diurnal motion goes on, well intact, east to west and back again to east despite their not delivering the missiles in the form of *arghyas* to quell the demons, impeding the solar orbit. They might also ask what happens when the sun moves back to east from west during nights when it would be visible only in the other hemisphere. These men should know that there are several islands in the universe, of which our *Jambūdvīpa* is just one. The inhabitants of the islands like *Śvetadvīp*, the *Vālakīyas* etc., are ever alert to their religious duties and would, therefore, not be guilty of dereliction of duty like these defaulters.

Other benefits of Sandhyāvandana

If *Prāṇāyāma* could improve one's health and extend the longevity, *Gāyatri Japa*, referred to in the body of the text, protects the chanter from the pernicious sins which would otherwise attract drastic punishments in hell – "*Pātakānām, upapātakānām gāyantam trāyate yasmin gāyatri ityabhidīyate*". The noblest quality in man is that which lifts him above the commonplace level of selfish pursuits to the domain of selfless service to mankind at large. Great indeed will be his joy on beholding that of his beneficiaries and so, even his joy acquires the lustre and aroma of selflessness, being related to the joy of those relieved by him of their erstwhile distress. If *Sandhyāvandana* could relieve no less than *Sūrya* who lights the world, from the mushrooming demons what greater joy and edification can the practicers look for ?

We shall now pass on to the preliminaries to be put through before one, eligible to perform *Sandhyāvandana*, embarks on it.

Upanayanam

जन्मना जायते शूद्रः
कर्मणा जायते द्विजः ।

Janmanā jāyate śūdraḥ
Karmaṇā jāyate dvijaḥ |

So say the vedas. One is not born a brahmin at birth. Actually, at birth, he is born a śūdra and is rendered a *dvija* (twice born) in the sense of spiritual regeneration only through *samskāras*.

The word *samskāra* means an act (ritual) which, when put through, renders the individual fit to perform a particular duty. The material content in the mother's womb of the progeny, with a great deal of inherent organic impurity forming the nucleus of the progeny, will suffice to establish the necessity for the subsequent cleaning by means of *samskāras*. These *samskāras*, prescribed in the scriptural texts, are a chain of rites, right from birth preparatory to one embarking on vedik chantings and vedik'rites.

The child should be born of duly married couple and not outside wedlock, this itself constituting a part of the *samskāra*. Even during pregnancy, that is, before the birth of the child, religious rites are performed for ensuring safe delivery and sound progeny with a built-in disposition for a fruitful life on emergence from the mother's womb. Even the naming of the baby when it is eleven days old is a *samskāra*. In naming the baby, our elders had been very particular in giving the names of deities so that the mere utterance of these names may generate auspiciousness and faith in God. In the sixth month after the birth of the baby, it is ceremoniously fed with solid food, this *samskāra* being known as *annaprāśana*. As a matter of fact, Hinduism (*sanātana dharma*) is not merely a view of life but also a way of life. The other *samskāras*, such as *coula* (tuft-wearing ceremony), follow.

By far the most important of the *samskāras* is *upanayanam*, conferring on the Subject eligibility to chant the vedas and perform vedik rites, including the *Sandhyāvandana*. The word *upanayanam* means keeping one close-by (*upa*—near ; *nayanam* — to fetch). In the good old days, the boys underwent a course of *gurukulavās*, akin to a residential university, in sylvan surroundings, away from townships, over a period of twelve to thirteen years, corresponding somewhat to the period required these days for graduation from college. The preceptor used to keep the boys, eligible for instruction, close to him, perform *upanayanam* and impart religious instructions thereafter. This *upanayanam* is also known as *Brahmopadeśa* as the Subject is initiated by the *Ācārya* to Sāvitrī (Gāyatrī) mantra and led towards Brahman. At this investiture, the disciple wears the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*) and acquires the appellation of a *Brahmacāri*. The sacred thread is the *Brahmasūtra*. As already stated, the vedik chantings and performance of vedik rites should be commenced only after the *samskāra* of *upanayanam*. The expression *upanayanam* could, therefore, mean being led close to the vedas — *veda samīpa nayanam*.

Actually, *Brahmopadeśa* is the enunciation of the highest (ultimate) truth, *paratātva*, proclaimed by the vedas. *Yajñopavīta dhāraṇam*, that is,

wearing of the sacred thread (*Brahmasūtra*) is an integral part of *upanayanam*. Viṣṇu Bhagavān is also known as *Yajñah*, (*Yajñovai Viṣṇuḥ* ; *Yajño Yajñapatih* etc.). As the sacrificial rites are all dedicated to Lord Viṣṇu, these rites are all termed as *yajñas*. *Upavītam* means that which surrounds. The thread that surrounds Viṣṇu is, therefore, *Yajñopavīta*. Lord Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa) is the *Antaryāmi*, the in-dweller (internal controller), seated in the heart-region of everyone and the thread, going round the body (from the left shoulder down to the navel and back to that shoulder via the back), is appropriately called *Yajñopavīta*. This term could also mean *Yajñārtham upavītam*, indicating thereby that without this *upavītam*, the vedik rites cannot be performed. This sacred thread is also called *Brahmasūtra* – Why ? The sacred thread is in three rows (strands), knotted together, the knot also being named after Brahman. It symbolises the conjunction of the three fundamental entities (truths), namely, *cit* (the sentient being – individual soul), *acit* (the non-sentient matter – body), and, *Īvara* (Brahman, the super-soul, the in-dweller), in an inseparable combination, the keynote of *Brahma Sūtras*. It could also denote the mind, word, and deed, knotted together and brought under spiritual control.

The first alternative shall at once explain why the sacred thread is called *Brahmasūtra*. The ends of the knot should point upwards to signify the final goal in view, namely, ascent to the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu in heaven, His transcendental abode. The knot should remain close to the heart-region, the seat of *Antaryāmi*, the Lord within. The sacred thread should neither extend below the navel nor stay above it. In the former case, loss of *tapas*, the spiritual build-up, occurs while in the latter case, diminution of longevity results. If the thread is too thick it results in loss of reputation ; if too thin, it results in loss of wealth. The *brahmacāri* (bachelor) wears just one sacred thread (comprising three strands), the *grihastas* (householders) wear a pair of them (two, each of three strands) and *vānaprastas* (those residing in forests leading a secluded life) another thread (the third one) in lieu of the upper garment, while the *sanyāsis* (who take to the holy order and the saffron robe) wear a single thread comprising, however, four strands to denote the fourth stage of life. The mantra one utters when one wears the thread is an address in the following terms. “May you wear the lovely *Yajñopavīta*, lofty and pure, worn first by *Prajāpati* (Brahma), the bestower of long life, so as to confer on you strength and spiritual lustre.”

It is incumbent on a brahmin boy to go through the *samskāra* of *upanayanam* on attaining the age of eight, a kṣatriya on attaining the age

of eleven and a vaiśya on attaining the age of twelve. If this age—limit is exceeded beyond sixteen, performance of *upanayanam* becomes but a futile exercise. Those eligible to initiate the youngster into this *saṁskāra* in place of the preceptor of yore are: father, father's father, elder brother, and traditionally constituted *Ācārya* in apostolic succession. This *saṁskāra* ushers in the second birth, the spiritual regeneration, the *Ācārya* being the father and *Sāvitrī* (*Gāyatrī*) being the mother. The babe born at birth, came out of the *Vīrya* (energy) of the father, dissipated downwards below the navel (solar—plexus, the seat of energy) into the mother's womb. The spiritual progeny, (*Jñānaputra*) now born, is that emanating from the said *Vīrya* drawn upwards from the *Ācārya*'s spiritual reservoir in the navel region.

As stated earlier, *upanayanam* is just a *saṁskāra*, rendering a person fit for *vedādhyayana* (chanting of vedas) and the performance of vedik rites and rituals. But alas ! let alone the kṣatriyas and vaiśyas, even among brahmins, not even one in a thousand, takes to *vedādhyayana*. On the other hand, even the immediate elders do not seem to be aware of the purport and implication of *upanayanam* (*Brahmopadeśa*) and loosely refer to it as the investiture of thread, and spend lavishly on it, as if it is a social function or festive *mela*, affording scope for fun and frolic, the primary vedik aspect being relegated to an insignificant place. Having thus needlessly committed themselves to a huge expenditure on such occasions, the parents do not have any hesitation in putting it off indefinitely, ignoring the age—factor prescribed therefor (as stated earlier), for want of the requisite funds and other facilities. It, therefore, needs to be emphasised over again that *upanayanam* is a purely vedik function to be put through within a specific age—limit with a view to embarking on *vedādhyayana* in good time. Financial and other constraints should, by no means, stand in the way of putting through a purely religious function where there is no place for social fanfare and the resultant extravagance. It would be sheer indifference, unpardonable, if the well—to—do parents also put off this very important function on some pretext or the other and delay the spiritual initiation of their male progeny, literally depriving them of timely spiritual nourishment. The author of this treatise will feel amply requited, rather, heave a sigh of relief, if it could serve as an eye—opener to the large number of parents and guardians who have hitherto been dragging their feet with an easy conscience.



YAJURVEDĪYA KĀLATRAYA SANDHYĀVANDANAM

I प्रातः सन्ध्यावन्दनम् - Prātaḥ Sandhyāvandanam

(Morning Session – at day-break)

The *Sandhyāvandana* has to be performed in three sessions:

- (1) At day-break, just before sun-rise,
- (2) At midday,
- (3) At sun-set, just before the Sun sinks down the horizon.

The first session has to be started after going through the morning routine, ending with the bath. It would be ideal if the conventional bath, i.e., plunging oneself inside the running water of a river or the standing column in a lake or pond (*Varuṇa Snānam*), or in the bath room, pouring adequate quantity of water over the entire body from head to foot is put through. The far-sighted and considerate Śāstrās have, however, prescribed several alternatives which could meet the needs of the situation. These are :

- a) *Pārthiva Snānam* : smearing the body, head to foot, with pure earth, uttering the relative purificatory mantra,
- b) *Āgneya Snānam* : smearing the body with the ash obtained from the ritual, known as *Agnihotra*,
- c) *Vāyaviya Snānam* : smearing the body with the dust from the hooves of the cows, uttering the *Gosāvītri mantra*,
- d) *Ākāśa Snānam* : bathing in the rain when there is also sunshine, side by side, known also as *divya snānam*.

Apart from the above five *Snānams* (ceremonial bath, invoking the five elements, Varuna, Prithvi, Agni, Vāyu and Ākāśa), there is the *mantra Snāna*, cleansing each limb of the body by chanting the relative mantra, mentally comprehending the torrential flow of Ganga from the lotus feet of Lord Śrīmannārāyaṇa making its entry through the scalp and coursing through the entire physical frame, washing out the impurities. And then, there is also the sponge-bath, rubbing the various limbs with a wet towel. The practicant cannot, therefore, plead inability to take a bath and perform *Sandhyāvandana* in due time, under the pretext of inclement weather and so on. The *mantra (mānasa – mental) Snāna* could easily be substituted for the conventional *Varuna Snāna* when the latter is not practicable so early in the morning. And so, one (primary) hurdle is removed. Even so, one starts the proceedings by uttering the following mantra for ensuring bodily purity, internal and external, at the commencement of each session, sprinkling water overhead at the same time :—

अपवित्रः पवित्रो वा सर्वाविस्थां गतोपिवा ।
यः स्मरेत् पुण्डरीकाक्षं स भात्याभ्यन्तरः शुचिः ॥

Apaviṭraḥ pavitro vā sarvāvasthām gato apivā |
Yaḥ smaret puṇḍarīkāksām sa bhātyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ ||

(The above mantra avers that mere meditation on Puṇḍarīkāksa, the lotus-eyed Lord Nārāyaṇa, cleanses one both inside and outside, irrespective of the degree and standard of purity on the part of the Subject at that time).

(1) आचमनम् - Ācamanaṁ

The right palm should be twisted so as to assume the shape of a *Gokarna* – the ear of a cow and a teaspoon-full of water poured into it and swallowed uttering 'ओं अच्युताय नमः' – *Om Acyutāya namaḥ*. This *Ācamanaṁ* should be followed by two other such exercises, the mantras, to be uttered successively, being 'ओं अनन्ताय नमः' – *Om Anantāya namaḥ*, and 'ओं गोविन्दाय नमः' – *Om Gōvindāya namaḥ*. Thereafter, the twelve mantras commencing with *Om Keśavāya namaḥ*, should be uttered in the same sequence as indicated, a particular finger touching a particular limb or part thereof, as indicated against each (see table – page15). When someone performs the vedik rites, skipping the *Ācamana* unwittingly, he fails to achieve the fruits of karma (act) – वृथा तस्य क्रिया – *Vṛthā tasya kriyā*

Ācamanam

Sequence	Mantra	Meaning	Posture
1	ओं केशवाय नमः <i>Om Keśavāya namaḥ</i>	Salutation to Keśava, who is signified by the Omkāra (embodiment of Om, the Pranava)	Right thumb touching the right cheek
2	ओं नारायणाय नमः <i>Om Nārāyaṇāya namaḥ</i>	”	Right thumb touching the left cheek
3	ओं माधवाय नमः <i>Om Mādhavāya namaḥ</i>	”	Right ring finger touching the right eye
4	ओं गोविन्दाय नमः <i>Om Gōvindāya namaḥ</i>	”	Right ring finger touching the left eye
5	ओं विष्णवे नमः <i>Om Viṣṇave namaḥ</i>	”	Right forefinger touching the right side of nose
6	ओं मधुसूदनाय नमः <i>Om Madhusūdanāya namaḥ</i>	”	Right forefinger touching the left side of nose
7	ओं त्रिविक्रमाय नमः <i>Om Trivikramāya namaḥ</i>	”	Right little finger touching the right ear
8	ओं वामनाय नमः <i>Om Vāmanāya namaḥ</i>	”	Right little finger touching the left ear
9	ओं श्रीधराय नमः <i>Om Śrīdharāya namaḥ</i>	”	Right middle finger touching the right shoulder
10	ओं हृषीकेशाय नमः <i>Om Hṛṣīkeśāya namaḥ</i>	”	Right middle finger touching the left shoulder
11	ओं पद्मनाभाय नमः <i>Om Padmanābhāya namaḥ</i>	”	All right fingers touching the navel
12	ओं दामोदराय नमः <i>Om Dāmōdarāya namaḥ</i>	”	All right fingers touching the scalp

(2) प्राणायामम् - Prāṇāyāmaṁ

The mantra to be chanted, the manner in which it has to be done and the benefits accruing therefrom (extracted from relevant texts) are indicated below :

- 1) ओं भूः, ओं भुवः, ओं सुवः, ओं महः, ओं जनः, ओं तपः, ओं सत्यं ।
Om Bhūḥ, Om Bhuvah, Om Suvah, Om Mahah, Om Janah, Om Tapah, Om Satyam |
- 2) ओं तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ।
Om tatsaviturvareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahī dhiyo yo naḥ pracōdayāt |
- 3) ओं आपः ज्योति रसः अमृतं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवस्सुवरो ॥
Om āpaḥ jyoti rasaḥ amṛtaṁ brahma bhūrbhuvassuvarom ||

The *Prāṇāyāma* mantra is divided into three sections as indicated above. Section (1) enumerates the seven regions (*vyāhrtis*) from *Bhūḥ*, the earth (*Bhūloka*) upwards, namely, *Bhuvarka*, *Suvarloka*, *Maharka*, *Janoloka*, *Tapoloka*, and *Satyarka*, preceded by "Om", in each case, to signify that all these worlds are but the several forms of Brahman, the subject-matter of *Pranava* (*Om*), the *Omkāra svarūpa*; He is the Soul, pervading all these worlds which constitute His *prākāra* or body.

Instead of taking *Bhūḥ*, *Bhuvah*, *Suvah* etc. as denoting the seven worlds (*lokas*) as such, Sudarśana Bhaṭṭar, the commentator, has explained these words in terms of the Lord Himself. The word *Bhūḥ* denotes Brahman, the first cause of things, one and all, the causeless cause ; *Bhuvah* denotes Him who resides in all (*bhavati ayam*) as well as (*bhavanti asmin*), Him in whom all things abide – His immanence, both internal and external; *Suvah* denotes Him, by whom everything is created (*ṣuñj prāṇi prasave*); *Mahah* (*mahīyate iti mahah*) denotes Him who is worshipped by all – it can also refer to His resplendence (*Āditya varṇam puruṣam—vidyullekheva bhāsvarā, nakṣatrā ṇi rūpam* etc. etc.); *Janah* (*Jātān nayatīti janah*) denotes Him who guides the destiny of His subjects in the light of their past actions, good and bad ; *Tapah* denotes Him who imparts heat and lustre, the brilliance of the Sun and the Moon being invested by Him, the brilliance of the brilliant; *Satyam* denotes Him, who, in terms of His form and essential nature, is not subject to mutation of any kind (*Satyam jñānam anantam Brahma, Satyasya Satyam* etc.), as proclaimed by the upaniṣads.

Further, along with each of these *vyāhṛtis*, the word *Om̐* is chanted ; hence each is a separate mantra. Thus, *Om̐ Bhūḥ* is one mantra, *Om̐ Bhuvah* is another and so on. Regarding the origin of *Praṇava* (*Om̐kāra*) and the *vyāhṛtis*, the veda (*bahvr̥ca brāhmaṇa*), declares : '*prajāpatir akāmayata prajāyāyeti*' The Supreme Lord willed that He should become manifold and did *sankalpa* (resolved) accordingly. Result : the earth, the *Devaloka*, and the interim space (*antarikṣa*) were ushered in. Resolving further in the light of these three products, three luminaries sprang forth – Fire from earth, the Sun from *Devaloka*, and *Vāyu* from space. Resolving further more in terms of these three luminaries, the three *vyāhṛtis* ensued : *Bhūḥ* from *Ṛgveda*, *Bhuvah* from *Yajurveda*, and *Suvah* from *Sāma veda*..... Resolving once more in the light of these three *vyāhṛtis*, the Lord brought out three letters, *a*, *u* and *m* from *Bhūḥ*, *Bhuvah*, and *Suvah* respectively. The *Parama Puruṣa* joined these three letters to form the *Om̐kāra* (*Praṇava* – *Om̐* (*AUM*)) the ultimate off-shoot of the earlier products, the all-pervasive; it is the Sun, the *swarg* etc. Yet another upaniṣad reveals that the *Praṇava* is the aggregate of all words, like unto the white plumes, forming the bunch of feathers of white birds ; it is veda itself and also Brahman. That is why Brahman is said to be *Om̐kāra Rūpa* – *Om̐kāreṇa sarvā vācas sa Om̐kāra eva veḍas sa Brahma*.

And now, we pass on to the second section of the *Prāṇāyāma*, namely, the *Gāyatri mantra*. गायन्तं त्रायते इति गायत्री – *Gāyantam̐ trāyate iti Gāyatri* – that which protects its chanters is *Gāyatri*. It is being chanted by all *dvijās*, irrespective of their sectarian denominations (*Vaiṣṇavās*, *Śaivās*, *Advaitis*, *Dvaitis* and *Viśiṣṭadvaitis*). Of course, the meaning of the *mahā mantra* is appreciated by them differently, in accordance with their respective tenets.

Actually, changing the prose order, the meaning of the mantra can be appreciated in two ways :–

(i) *Savituh̐ devasya varenyam̐ tat bhargah̐ dhīmahi yah̐ nah̐ dhiyah̐ pracodayāt*.

Let us meditate (*dhīmahi*) on the multitude of auspicious traits (*bhargah̐*) of Lord *Nārāyaṇa* (*devasya*) who created all the worlds (*savituh̐*) and who is eminently fit to be adored by one and all (*varenyam̐*); He is the one who induces or turns (*pracodayāt*) our mind and intellect (*dhiyah̐*) towards propitiating Him.

- (ii) *Devasya savituh varenyam bhargah tat dhimahi yah nah dhiyah pracodayat.*
(the shift here is not only in the prose order but also in the meanings of the words *devasya*, *savituh* and *bhargah*).

We meditate on (*dhimahi*) the resplendent Lord with a Supernal Form (*bhargah*) – (*Divyamangala Vighraha* – Transcendental Form) – who possesses extraordinary brilliance and innumerable auspicious attributes (*devasya*), who stays inside the Sun as its internal controller (*savituh*) and who is propitiated by one and all (*varenyam*). (The rest is, as in (i) above). He is the one who induces or turns (*pracodayat*) our mind and intellect (*dhiyah*) towards propitiating Him.

Section (3) of *Prāṇāyāma*, known as *Gāyatri Śiras* is virtually a reinforcement of section (1) insofar as it brings out that all things, in the final analysis, denote Him, the In-dweller, the internal controller of all things and beings, mobile and stationary ; water (*āpah*), radiance (*jyoti* – fire and other luminous bodies); delicious juice (*rasa*), ambrosia (*amṛtam*), Brahma, *Bhūh*, *Bhuvah* and *Suvah*, one and all, signify the Supreme Lord, denoted by *Prāṇava* (*Omkāra*), the epitome of the entire veda.

And now, the manner (*modus operandi*) of doing the *Prāṇāyāma* or the control of the vital breath :

Holding the nose between the right thumb and the right ring finger, the *Prāṇāyāma* mantra (sections 1 to 3) should be uttered, drawing, to start with, the down-going breath (*apāna*) upward through the left nostril, connecting it with the *Prāṇā* (up-going vital breath), a process, known as *Pūraka*, arresting, for a while thereafter, the motion of both the breaths (upgoing and down-coming), that is, holding the breath – a process, known as *Kumbhaka* – and finally, letting the breath out through the right nostril downwards, that is, connecting the vital breath *Prāṇā* with the vital breath *apāna*, a process, known as *recaka*.

*'Nāsikotkr̥ṣṭa ucchavāsodmātaḥ pūraka ucyate
Kumbhako niścalaśvāso mucyamānastu recaket'*

(– *Yoga Yājñyavalkya*)

*Apāne juhvati prāṇam prāṇe apānam tathāpare |
Prāṇāpānagatiruddhvā prāṇāyāma parāyaṇā ||*

(– *Bhagavad Gita IV – 29*)

If the entire process is gone through thrice, it constitutes one *Prāṇāyāma*. It deserves to be noted that the mantras, incorporated in this *Prāṇāyāma*, are contained in the 27th and 28th Anuvākās of Nārāyaṇavalli in Taittirīyopaniṣad and that Lord Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme One (Parama Puruṣa) propitiated by these mantrās. The word 'Brahma' occurring in Section (3) (*Gāyatri Śīras*) also refers to the Supreme Lord and not the four-faced 'Brahma' as such ; c.f. '*Ṣatyam jñānam anantham brahma*', '*Nārāyaṇa param brahmā*' etc. etc. '*Bṛihatvāt brahmaṇatvācca tad brahmetyabhidhīyate*' – the Supreme is called Brahman because He is big and makes others also big.

Benefits of *Prāṇāyāma*

Sage Yājñavalkya has declared : he, who controls the breath and contemplates the seven *vyāhṛtis*, is deemed to have propitiated all the seven worlds. Besides, he acquires the strength and ability to move around all over these worlds. The *Gāyatri Śīras* is the very embodiment, in a concentrated form, of the entire veda; uttering it but once, the *upāsaka* (practicant) gets released from the bondage of *samsāra* (the cycle of birth and death).

Sage Bodhāyana avers : *Prāṇāyāma*, if put through in the manner enjoined, absolves the practicant of the sins committed by him through the media of the various organs of the body, including the mind and intellect.

Yamasṛti makes it absolutely clear that he, who practises *Prāṇāyāma*, with its three constituents of *Vyahṛtis*, *Gāyatri* and *Gāyatri Śīras*, gets absolved of even the most heinous sins like *Brahmahatya* (killing a brahmin); the practicant enjoys freedom from fear of any kind. There are several other texts extolling the merits of *Prāṇāyāma* ; within the none-too elaborate compass of the present treatise, it would suffice to wind up this aspect by quoting Manu, the famous law-giver. He points out admirably that the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* is itself a *tapas* (austerity) of a high order, purifying the practicants and purging them of all sins like unto gold and silver shedding the dross when heated on fire, and shining in their pristine lustre.

Lastly, from the commonsense point of view (scientific, no doubt) the longevity of the practicant gets extended by the extent by which he holds the breath in the process. As already explained, one's longevity is reckoned in terms of the allotted number of breaths (allotment, made at the time of birth, believed to have been inscribed right on the scalp) and not in terms of days, which again vary from calender to calender, almanac to almanac. That is why it is stated that one has breathed his last (breath) when one dies.

(3) सङ्कल्पः - Sankalpaḥ

At this stage, the practicant should do *sankalpa* (resolve) as follows :

Vaiṣṇavite Tenkalai sect :

श्री भगवदाज्ञया भगवत्कैकर्ये प्रातः सन्ध्यां* उपासिष्ये

Śrī Bhagavadāññayā Bhagavatkaiṅkarye prātaḥ Sandhyām upāsiṣye

(I perform these morning rituals, decreed by Bhagavān, in a spirit of service (dedication) to Him.)

*The words प्रातः सन्ध्यां, above should be substituted by माध्याह्निकं – *mādhyāhnikam* and सायं सन्ध्यां – *sāyam sandhyām* in the the midday and evening sessions, respectively.

Vaiṣṇavite Vaḍagalai sect

Substitute श्रीमन्नारायण प्रीत्यर्थ – *Śrīmannārāyaṇa prīthyartham* for *Bhagavatkaiṅkarye*

The amended text would mean 'I perform these morning rituals decreed by Bhagavān in order to earn the pleasure of *Śrīmannārāyaṇa*'.

Smārthās :

Substitute *Śrī Bhgavadāññayā Bhagavatkaiṅkarye* with मम उपात्त समस्त दुरितक्षयद्वारा परमेश्वरप्रीत्यर्थ – *Mama upātta samasta duritakṣayadvārā Paramēśvarapṛītyartham*. This means "I invoke the pleasure of Paramēśvara through these rituals to wipe off all my sins."

(4) प्रोक्षण मन्त्रः - Prokṣaṇa mantraḥ

आपोहिष्ठेति मन्त्रस्य सिन्धुद्वीप र्षिः

देवी गायत्री छन्दः आपोदेवता प्रोक्षणे विनियोगः ।

Āpohiṣṭheti mantrasya Sindhudvīpa ṛṣiḥ

Dēvī Gāyatrī chandaḥ āpodevatā prokṣaṇe viniyogaḥ |

The *Rṣi* for the mantra to be recited now is Sindhudvīpar, *Chandas* (metre) is Gāyatri and *Devatā* (deity) is Āpaḥ (water, actually denoting the Supreme Lord who pervades it, as spelt out by Śri Pañcarātra and other sātṭvik sāsṭras).

And now, the *Prokṣana mantra* : Muttering *Śri Keśavāya Namaḥ*, the practicant should draw a line in the centre of the forehead, bottom upwards with the right fore-finger, and then spell out the following mantra, sprinkling water on the head at the same time.

आपोहिष्ठा मयोभुवः । ता न ऊर्जे दधातन । महेरणाय चक्षसे । यो वः शिवतमो
रसः । तस्य भाजयतेह नः । उशतीरिव मातरः । तस्मा अरं गमाम वः । यस्य क्षयाय
जिन्वथ । आपो जनयथा च नः ।

*Āpohiṣṭhā mayobhuvah | tā na ūrje dadhātana | maheraṇāya cakṣase | yo
vah śivatamo rasah | tasya bhājayateha nah | uśatīriva mātaraḥ | tasmā aram
gamāma vah | yasya kṣayāya jinvaṭha | āpo janayathā ca nah |*

“May ye waters, who are in a position to confer on everyone felicity of every kind (*hey āpah yūyam mayo bhuvah hi ṣṭah*), offer us (*dadhātana*) to the Supreme Lord who is steadfast (*ūrje*), exalted (*mahe*), charming (*raṇāya*) and like unto the eyes of one and all (*cakṣase*) ; may you make us acquire (*bhājayata*) in this world (*iha*) that (*tasya*) highly auspicious essence of yours (*śivatamaḥ rasah – bhakti*) like the loving mother does (*uśatīh mātaraḥ iva*); we intensely meditate on you (*vah aram gamāma*) to enable us to attain to that Bhagavān (*tasmāi*) whose pleasure you have earned by being His abode (*yasya kṣayāya jinvaṭha*) ; ye waters (*āpah*)! make us alive in the real sense (*nah janayatha*).

(5) प्रातः तीर्थप्राशन मन्त्रः - Prātaḥ tīrthapraśana mantrah

(The text of this mantra, while uttering which the practicant has to hold water in his right palm and then swallow it after the incantation, is different for the midday and evening sessions. The relevant texts are indicated in the respective sections. This particular mantra is for the morning session only).

सूर्यश्च मा मन्युश्च मन्युपतयश्च मन्युकृतेभ्यः । पापेभ्योरक्षन्तां । यद्रात्र्या
पापमकार्षम् । मनसा वाचा हस्ताभ्यां । पदभ्यामुदरेण शिशना । रात्रिस्तदवलुम्पतु ।
यत्किञ्च दुरितं मयि । इदमहं माममृत योनौ । सूर्ये ज्योतिषि जुहोमिस्वाहा ॥

*Sūryaśca mā manyuśca manyupatayaśca manyukṛtebhyah | pāpēbhyo-
rakṣantām | yadrātryā pāpamakārṣam | manasā vācā hastābhyām |
padabhyāmudarēṇa śiśnā | rātristadavalumpatu | yatkiñca duritaṁ mayi |
idamaham māmamṛta yonou | sūrye jyotiṣi juhomisvāhā ||*

May the Sun, Indra and the other Devas' subordinate to Him (*Sūryaśca, manyuśca, manyupatayaśca*) deliver me (*mā rakṣantām*) from whatever sins (*pāpēbhyaḥ*) I committed overnight (*yadrātrayā pāpaṁ akārṣam*) through anger (*manyu kritebhyaḥ*) by mind, word, hands, feet, tummy and genital organs (*manasā, vācā, hastābhyāṁ, padbhyām, udarēṇa, śiśnā*); let the other sins, committed by me earlier on (*yat kiñca duritam mayi*), be wiped out (*avalampatu*) by the Deity controlling the night (*rātriḥ*); I (*aham*) offer, as oblation (*juhomi*), this, my soul (*idam mām*) unto the Supreme Lord, who is the sole instrument of one's emancipation (*mokṣa*), resplendent (*jyotiṣi*) and the great Ordainer of all events (*Sūrye*).

(6) पुनः प्रोक्षण मन्त्रः - **Punaḥ Prōkṣaṇa mantrah**

दधिक्राव्णो अकार्षं जिष्णोरश्वस्य वाजिनः । सुरभिनो मुखा करत् । प्रण आयूंषि तारिषत् । Rest as in (4) above.

Dadhikrāvṇo akārṣam jiṣṇoraśvasya vājinah | Surabhino mukhā karat. | prāṇa āyūṁṣi tāriṣat | rest as in (4) above (āpo hiṣṭhā)

Unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, who gave Himself over to the shepherdesses in Vraja in exchange for curd (*dadhikrāvṇah*), the vanquisher of the horse-shaped fiend, Kēśi, possessed of terrific speed (*jiṣṇoḥ aśvasya vājinah*), I offer my soul (*akārṣam*) ! Let that Bhagavān impart fragrance to our faces (*surabhinaḥ mukhā karat*) ; let Him make our life-span grow (*naḥ āyūṁṣi pratāriṣat*). The rest as in (4) above.

(7) अर्घ्यप्रदानं - **Arghyapradānam**

Arghyapradānam is performed, as follows : The practicant takes water in the hollow of the palms, joined together, taking care to see that the thumbs (right and left) are kept apart without touching the respective forefingers. He then throws the water skyward, in the direction of the Sun, uttering the *Gāyatri mantra* 'Om Bhūḥ Bhuvah Suvah, Om tat savitur varēnyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracōdayāt', the meaning whereof has already been given in (2) above under *Prāṇāyāmaṁ*. This *arghyapradānam* has to be done thrice in the morning session, twice in the midday session, and again thrice in the evening session. One more *arghyam* has, however, to be delivered whenever the time-limit, prescribed for the performance in the respective session is exceeded (due, it is presumed, to circumstances beyond one's control) after performing *prāṇāyāma*, followed by a *sankalpa*, the text

of which is as follows :— '*kālātīta doṣa prāyaścittārtham ekārghya pradānam kariṣye*' After the delivery of the extra *arghyam*, water should be taken in the right palm and thrown around the head (in the clock-wise direction, looking from above head), simultaneously circumambulating around oneself, muttering the mantra '*Om bhūḥ bhuvah suvah*'. Then, saluting with joined palms, the mantra, '*asāvādityo Brahma*' should be uttered, signifying that the Sun is but a manifestation of Para Brahmam, the Supreme Brahman.

[Note :— Some make a separate *sankalpa* even for the initial *arghya-pradānam* (as distinguished from the extra one), preceded by *pranāyāma*. The text of the *sankalpa* in that case would be '*Śri Bhagavadājñayā Bhagavat kinkarye* (or the other appropriate alternatives for the other sects) *prātaḥ sandhyā arghya pradānam kariṣye*'. But, mostly this is not done, based on the concept that the *Sandhyāvandanam* itself is *arghyapradānam* and the initial *sankalpa*, as in (3) above, would, therefore, suffice].

(8) जल तर्पणम् - Jala tarpaṇam

Now, *Ācamanam* should be done as in (1) above and then, the following twelve *tarpaṇas* should be performed, propitiating Lord Viṣṇu, denoted by the names, Kēśava, Nārāyaṇa etc. If performed in a river or a tank, these *tarpaṇas* should be performed by taking water in the hollow of the joined palms and pouring it in the river/pond. Otherwise, it should be done with the right palm, pouring water into it from a vessel and throwing it on the ground.

1) केशवं तर्पयामि	(<i>Kēśavam tarpayāmi</i>)	—	I propitiate Kēśava
2) नारायणं	(<i>Nārāyaṇam</i>)	—	„ Nārāyaṇa
3) माधवं	(<i>Mādhavam</i>)	—	„ Mādhava
4) गोविन्दम्	(<i>Gōvindam</i>)	—	„ Gōvinda
5) विष्णुं	(<i>Viṣṇum</i>)	—	„ Viṣṇu
6) मधुसूदनं	(<i>Madhusūdanam</i>)	—	„ Mādhusūdana
7) त्रिविक्रमं	(<i>Trivikramam</i>)	—	„ Trivikrama
8) वामनं	(<i>Vāmanam</i>)	—	„ Vāmana
9) श्रीधरं	(<i>Śrīdharam</i>)	—	„ Śrīdhara
10) हृषीकेशं	(<i>Hṛṣīkēśam</i>)	—	„ Hṛṣīkēśa
11) पद्मनाभं	(<i>Padmanābham</i>)	—	„ Padmanābha
12) दामोदरं	(<i>Dāmodaram</i>)	—	„ Dāmodara

Ācamana should be done again and two more *tarpaṇas* should be done thereafter, as follows :

कृष्णार्पणमस्तु (*Kṛṣṇārpaṇamastu*) – May this offering be to Kṛṣṇa
वासुदेवार्पणमस्तु (*Vāsudēvārpaṇamastu*) – „ Vāsudeva

The Smārthas, however, perform nine more *tarpaṇas*, propitiating the nine planets (*Sūryam tarpayāmi* etc. ...) before the twelve *tarpaṇas* propitiating Keśava etc. They also do *prāṇāyāma*, followed by the following *sankalpa* before commencing the *tarpaṇas* :— ‘*mama upātta Parameśvara prītyartham prātaḥ sandhyā tarpaṇam karisyē*’

The rest of the *Sandhyāvandana* is done either on the bank of the river/pond or in the courtyard or any other interior part of the house, in a sitting posture, facing east.

(9) गायत्री मन्त्र जपं - Gāyatrī mantra japam

After doing *Prāṇāyāma*, as in (2) above, the following *sankalpa* should be made –

श्री भगवदाज्ञया भगवत्कैकर्यं (or the appropriate alternative as in (3) above, applicable to various sects) प्रातः संध्या गायत्री मन्त्र जपं करिष्ये (*Śrī Bhagavadājñayā Bhagavad-kaiṅkaryam* (or the appropriate alternative, applicable to various sects) *prātaḥ sandhyā gāyatrī mantra japam karisyē*). This should be followed by the mention of the *Rṣis*, *chandas* and *Dēvatas* for the *Pranava*, *Vyāhrtis*, *Gāyatri* and *Gāyatri Śiras*, as follows:

‘प्रणवस्य ब्रह्मा ऋषिः देवी गायत्री छन्दः परमात्मा देवता । भूरादि सप्त व्याहृतीनां अत्रि भृगु कुत्स वसिष्ठ गौतम काश्यपाङ्गिरसार्षयः गायत्र्युष्णिक् अनुष्टुप् बृहती पङ्क्ति त्रिष्टुप् जगत्यः छन्दांसि अग्निर्वायुर्व्यर्क वागीश वरुणेन्द्र विश्वे देवा देवताः । गायत्र्याविश्वामित्रर्षिः देवी गायत्री छन्दः सविता देवता । गायत्रीशिरसः ब्रह्मा ऋषिः अनुष्टुप् छन्दः परमात्मा देवता ॥ सर्वेषां प्राणायामे विनियोगः’

‘*Pranavasya brahmā ṛṣiḥ dēvī gāyatrī chandah paramātmā dēvatā | bhūrādi sapta vyāhrtīnām atri bhṛgu kutsa vasiṣṭha gautama kāśyapāṅgirasārṣayah gāyatri uṣṇik anuṣṭup br̥hati paṅgti triṣṭup jagatyah chandāmsi, agnirvāyuvyarka vāgīśa varuṇendra viśve devā devatāḥ | gāyatrīyah viśvāmitrarṣiḥ dēvī gāyatrī chandah savitā dēvatā | gayatrīśirasaḥ brahmā ṛṣiḥ anuṣṭup chandah paramātmā dēvatā || sarveṣām prāṇāyāme viniyogaḥ*’.

Mantra	Ṛṣi	Chandas	Devata
Praṇava <i>Sapta Vyāhrtis</i>	Brahmā	Gāyatrī	Paramātmā
Bhūḥ	Atri	Gāyatri	Agni
Bhuvah	Bhṛgu	Uṣṇik	Vāyu
Suvah	Kutsa	Anuṣṭup	Arka (Sūrya)
Mahah	Vasiṣṭa	Bṛhatī	Bṛhaspati (Vāgīśa)
Janaḥ	Gautama	Paṅgti	Varuṇa
Tapah	Kāśyapa	Triṣṭup	Indra
Satyam	Angīrasa	Jagati	Viśvedeva
<i>Gāyatri</i>	Viśvāmitra	Gāyatrī	Savitā
<i>Gāyatri śiras</i>	Brahmā	Anuṣṭup	Paramātmā

This should be followed by *Prāṇāyāma* ten times. After that, one more *saṅkalpa* should be done, as follows : श्री भगवदाज्ञया भगवत्कैङ्कर्यं (or the respective alternative for the various sects, as in (3) above) गायत्र्यावाहनं करिष्ये *Gāyatrāyāvāhanam Karisyē*.

गायत्र्यावाहन मन्त्रः : Gāyatrāyāvāhana mantrah

आयातु वरदा देवी अक्षरं ब्रह्मसंमितं । गायत्रीं छन्दसां माता इदं ब्रह्म जुषस्वनः ॥
ओजोऽसि सहोऽसि बलमसि भ्राजोसि देवानां धामनामासि । विश्वमसि विश्वायुः सर्वमसि
सर्वायुः अभिभूरोम् गायत्रीं आवाहयामि ॥ सावित्रीं आवाहयामि । सरस्वतीं आवाहयामि ।

*Āyātu varadā dēvī akṣaram brahmasammitam | gāyatrīm chandasām
mātā idam Brahma juṣasvanah || Ojo asi saho asi balamasi bhrājosi devānām
dhāmanāmāsi | viśvamasi viśvāyuh sarvamasi sarvāyuh abhibhūrom gāyatrīm
āvāhayāmi || sāvitrīm āvāhayāmi | sarasvatīm āvāhayāmi*

'May Śrīdevi (*Devi*), the granter of boons to Her votaries (*varadā*) and the Supreme Brahman, the eternal (*akṣaram*) and well-known (*sammitam*) deign to go over here (*āyātu*); O Gāyatrī, the Mother of the vedas (*chandasāmmātā*) ! May you make us (*naḥ*) attain (*juṣasva*) Śrīdevi (*Īm*) and Nārāyaṇa (*Idam Brahma*) ; O, Lord Śrīmannārāyaṇa ! Thou art the sustaining force of the entire universe (*ojah asi*); Thou art the sole Ordainer of one and all (*sahaḥ asi*); Thou art the unique reservoir, the perennial source of all strength (*balam asi*), Thou art brilliance, the very source of luminosity (*bhrājah asi*); Thou art the abode of devās and all their names indicate You (indirectly), as the one dwelling in everyone (*Dēvānām dhāma nāma asi*); Thou art the universe, bearing, as you do, the name 'Viśvam' (*Viśvamasi*);

Thou art everything (*sarvaṁ asi*); all things and beings converge in Thee; Thou art the life-giver, the animating force for one and all (*sarvāyuhḥ asi*) ; Thou art the conqueror of all foes (*abhibhūḥ asi*) ; I, the vassal of the Supreme Brahman, expounded by Om̐, invite (invoke) Gāyatrī (*Gāyatrīm Āvāhayāmi*), invite do I Sāvitrī (*Sāvitrīm āvāhayāmi*), I invite Sarasvatī (Gāyatrī, in the form of Sarasvatī, Goddess of speech)

(Reciting this mantra, the Gāyatrīdevī should be meditated upon manifest in the heart-region. The joined palms should be turned inwards in front of the heart thrice).

And now, the *Gāyatrī japa* should be put through. First of all, the relative *Rṣi*, namely Viśvāmitraḥ *Rṣiḥ*, *chandas* (metre), namely, Gāyatrī chandaḥ and *Devata*, namely, Savitā Devatā should be spelt out. And then, the *Gāyatrī mantra* should be chanted, 108 times, 32 times or 28 times (any of these, in terms of the time at one's disposal) – “*Om̐ bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ tat saviturvarenyam̐ bhargo dēvasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracōdayāt*” (meaning already explained in section (2)).

It would be no exaggeration if it is held that the *Gāyatrī japa* is the cardinal part of ‘Sandhya worship.’ The scriptures proclaim that Gāyatrī is the mother of the vedas (*Gāyatrīm chandasāmmātā*). The fruit of the study of the vedas can be gained only through the performance of *Gāyatrī japa* together with the *vyāhṛtis* (*Om̐ bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ*). The *japa* yields a plethora of benefits. There are several anecdotes in *Mahābhārata* etc. highlighting the efficacy of *Gāyatrī japa*. It can form a separate treatise by itself.

(10) गायत्री उद्वासन मन्त्रः - Gāyatrī udvāsana mantrah

After doing the *Gāyatrī japa*, as indicated in section (9) above, a *sankalpa* should be made preceding the chanting of the *udvāsana* (farewell) mantra, as given below: ‘*Śri Bhagavadājñayā Bhagavat Kainkaryam̐* (or the other alternatives for other sects as in section (3) above) *Prātaḥ Sandhyā Gāyatrī upasthānam̐ Karisyē*’. And now the *udvāsana mantra* –

उत्तमे शिखरे देवि ! भूम्यां पर्वतमूर्धनि ।
ब्राह्मणेभ्योऽह्यनुज्ञानं गच्छ देवि ! यथासुखम् ॥

Uttame śikhare devi ! bhūmyām̐ parvatamūrdhani |
Brāhmaṇebhyohyanujñānam̐ gaccha devi ! yathāsukham̐ ||

The prose order would be – *Devi ! brāhmaṇebhyaḥ anujñānaṁ (dadāsi) hi, Devi ! uttame parvatamūrdani śikhare yathāsukhaṁ gaccha.*

Ó Gāyatri Devi ! The gnostics (*jñānis*) acquire true knowledge of the Supreme Brahman due to your benign grace ; O, Śrīdevi ! may you repair to the eminent peaks of hallowed mountains like Meru, Veṅkaṭāchalam, Raivataka, Govardhan, Chitrakūṭa etc. and sport there as you like, (to your heart's content).

(11) प्रातः उपस्थान मन्त्रः - Prātaḥ upasthāna mantraḥ

(After the *japam*, as above [section (10)], with folded hands stand facing the east, chant the following mantra, meditating on Paramātmā in the solar orb. The *upasthāna mantra* varies from session to session ; the mantra for the mid-day and evening sessions will be indicated under the respective heads later). This mantra is for the morning session only.

मित्रस्य चर्षणीधृतः श्रवोदेवस्य सानसिं ।
 सत्यं चित्रश्र वस्तमम् ॥
 मित्रो जनान् यातयति प्रजानन् ।
 मित्रोदाधार पृथिवीमुतद्याम् ॥
 मित्र कृष्टीरनिमिषाभिचष्टे ।
 सत्यायहव्यं घृतवद्विधेम ॥
 प्रसमित्र मर्तो अस्तु प्रयस्वान् ।
 यस्य आदित्य शिक्षति व्रतेन ॥
 न हन्यते नजीयते त्वोतो नैनमहो ।
 अश्नोत्यन्तितो न दूरात् ॥

Mitrasya carṣaṇīdhṛtaḥ śravodevasya sānasim̐ |
Satyam̐ citraśra vastamaṁ ||
mitro janān yātayati prajānan |
mitrodādhāra pṛthivīmutadyām̐ ||
mitra kṛṣṭīranimiṣā abhicaṣṭe |
satyāyahavyam̐ ghṛtavadvidhema ||
prasamitra marto astu prayasvān |
yasya āditya śikṣati vratena ||
na hanyate najīyate tvoto nainamaho |
aśnotyantito na dūrāt ||

I desire redemption from the sorrow-ridden *samsāra* (worldly ties) (*śravaḥ*) by the Lord (*Devasya*), the sole sustainer of the sprawling worlds (*carṣaṇī dhṛtaḥ*), the universal saviour (*mitrasya*) of exalted fame of wonderful dimensions, eternal and endearing (*citraśravastamaḥ, satyam, sānasim*) ; the all-knowing (*Prajānan*) Bhagavān (*Mitraḥ*), guides the individual souls along the chartered course of each (*janān yātayati*) ; the infinite Lord (*Mitraḥ*) sustains the earth and *svarga* (*pr̥thivīm udatyām dādhāraḥ*) ; the Lord, who spanned (measured by pacing) all the three worlds (*Mitraḥ*) keeps watching all the subjects, the inside out of them all who exert themselves in one way or the other to eke out their livelihood (*kr̥ṣṭih animiṣābhicaṣṭe*) ; unto Him, the eternal (ultimate) truth, let us offer as libation our very soul in the sacrificial fire, fed by the ghee of God-love (*Satyāya gḥṛtavat havyam vidhema*) ; O, Universal Saviour (*Mitraḥ*), O, Lord Vāmana, son of Aditi (*Āditya*) ! Let that man who feels inspired and reassured by your response to the call of the destitute become enjoyable by you in ample measure like delicious food (*yaḥ marataḥ te vratena śikṣati saḥ pra prayasvān astu*) ; your devotee (*tvōtaḥ*) cannot be tormented by anyone (*nahanyate*) nor is he conquerable by any (*najīyate*). Sins shall not (dare not) approach him (this person) from near or far (*enam amhaḥ antitaḥ na aśnoti dūrāt na aśnoti*).

After the *Gāyatri upasthānam*, as above, the following should be uttered with joined palms, facing the different directions, by turns, in the following order-east, south, west and north.

सन्ध्यायै नमः :- *Sandhyāyai namaḥ* (salutation to Sandhya)

सावित्र्यै नमः :- *Sāivtryai namaḥ* (salutation to Sāvitrī)

गायत्र्यै नमः :- *Gāyatriyai namaḥ* (salutation to Gāyatri)

सरस्वत्यै नमः :- *Sarasvatyai namaḥ* (salutation to Sarasvati)

सर्वाभ्यो देवताभ्यो नमः :- *Sarvābhyo devatābhyo namaḥ*
(salutation to Dēvatās, one and all).

कामोकार्षीन्मन्युरकार्षीन्नमो नमः :- *Kāmokārṣīnmanyurakārṣīnnamo namaḥ*
(Salutation, Salutation to the Supreme Brahman, the Internal Controller of all, including the Devatas, for deliverance from deeds, performed by me under the influence of lust (*kāma*) and anger (*manyuraḥ*)).

(12) अभिवादन - Abhivādana

The practicant should then utter the *Abhivādanamantra*, setting out his (1) Descent, (2) Gotra, (3) Sūtra, (4) Vēda Śākha and (5) Name, as follows, and prostrate on the ground.

अभिवादये (1) त्रयार्षय प्रवरान्वित (2)
 गोत्रः, (3) सूत्रः (4) शाखाध्यायी
 (5) शर्मा नामाहं अस्मिभोः.

Abivādāye (1) *trayārṣaya pravarānvita* (2)
 *gotraḥ*, (3) *Sūtraḥ*, (4)
śākhādhyāyī (5) *śarmānāmahaṁ asmi bhoh.*

[Note :— 1) The three or five *Rṣis* from whom the practicant descends in the paternal lineage should be mentioned here; 2) The *Gōtra*, such as *Ātreya*, *Bhāradwāja*, *Kausika* etc. is usually the first of the *Rṣis* mentioned in (1) above ; 3) The *Sūtra* such as *Bōdhāyana*, *Āpasthamba* etc. 4) The *Śakhā* that is, *Rg*, *Yajur* or *Sāma*, and 5) The name, ending with *Śarma*, given at birth or the one specially given at the time of *upanayanam*] — (See Appendix for more details).

After this, salutation is to be made to the directions, facing each direction (East, South, West, North, above (*ūrdhvāya*), below (*adharāya*), the sky (*antarikṣā*), Earth (*Bhūmi*) and lastly, to Lord Viṣṇu.

प्राच्यै दिशे नमः — *Prācyai diśe namaḥ*, दक्षिणायैदिशे नमः — *Dakṣiṇāyai diśe namaḥ*, प्रतीच्यैदिशे नमः — *Pratīchyai diśe namaḥ*, उदीच्यैदिशे नमः — *Udīcyai diśe namaḥ*, अधराय नमः — *Adharāya namaḥ*, अन्तरिक्षाय नमः — *Antarikṣāya namaḥ*, भूम्यै नमः — *Bhūmyai namaḥ*, विष्णवे नमः — *Viṣṇave namaḥ*.

After this, श्री कृष्णाय नमः — (*Sri Kṛṣṇāya namaḥ*) is uttered ten times and finally —

कायेन वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा बुद्ध्यात्मनावा प्रकृतेः स्वभावात् ।
 करोमि यद्यात्सकलं परस्मै नारायणायेति समर्पयामि ॥

Kāyena vācā manasendriyairvā buddhyātmanāvā prakṛteḥ svabhāvāt |
Karomi yadyatsakalam parasmai Nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayāmi ||

(Whatever I do through body, speech, mind, sense, and intellect, incidental to my association with *Prakṛti* (matter), I dedicate to the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa)

The proceedings are now concluded with the following prayers (by Śrī Vaiṣṇavās ; the other sects may have their own prayers).

ध्येयः सदा सवितृमण्डल मध्यवर्ती नारायणस्सरसिजासन सन्निविष्टः । केयूरवान्
मकर कुण्डलवान् किरीटीहारी हिरण्मय वपुः धृतशङ्ख चक्रः शङ्खचक्रगदापाणे
द्वारकानिलय अच्युत गोविन्द पुण्डरीकाक्ष रक्षमां शरणागताम् ॥

Dyeyaḥ sadā savitrmaṇḍala madhyavartī Nārāyaṇaḥ sarasijāsana sanniviṣṭaḥ | Kēyūravān makara kuṇḍalavān kirīṭihārī hiraṇmaya vapuḥ dhṛtaśaṅkha cakraḥ śankacakraḡadāpāṇe Dvārakānilaya Acyuta Gōvinda Puṇḍarikākṣa rakṣamāṁ śaraṇāgatām ||

(Lord Nārāyaṇa, dwelling in the orb of the Sun, of golden hue, seated in a lotus posture, bedecked with ornaments of rare excellence like shoulder bands, ear rings, crown, garland, and wielding the conch and discus (of rare brilliance) is the deity to be meditated upon, for ever. O, Lord, wielding the conch, discus and mace ! O, resident of Dvāraka ! O, Acyutā ! Gōvinda ! Puṇḍarikākṣā (O, Lotus-eyed !) deign to protect the supplicant, presently surrendering to your loving grace.

नमोब्रह्मण्यदेवाया गोब्राह्मणहितायच ।
जगद्धिताय कृष्णाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ॥

Namobrahmanyadēvāya gobrahmaṇahitāyaca | Jagaddhitāya kṛṣṇāya Gōvindāya namo namaḥ ||

(Salutation to Kṛṣṇa, the Deva, very dear to the Brahmins, the great Benefactor of Cows and Brahmins, the sustainer of the universe, having an eye on the weal of one and all)

श्रीरङ्ग मङ्गलनिधिं करुणानिवासं
श्रीवेङ्कटाद्रि शिखरालय कालमेघम् ।
श्री हस्तिशैल शिखरोज्वल पारिजातं
श्रीशं नमामि शिरसा यदुशैलदीपम् ॥

*Śrīraṅga maṅgalanidhiṁ karuṇānivāsaṁ
Śrīveṅkaṭādri śikharālaya kālamegham |
Śrī hastiśaila śikharōjjvala pārijātaṁ
Śrīśaṁ namāmi śirasā yaduśailadīpaṁ ||*

I bow my head to the Lord of Śrī who is: the auspicious crest-jewel of Śrīrangam⁽¹⁾, the Abode of Compassion; the water-laden cloud (bounteous) atop Śrī Venkatādri⁽²⁾; the Pārijāta flower (of celestial fragrance) resplendent on the peak of Śrī Hastigiri hill⁽³⁾; and the Beacon Light on Yadugiri⁽⁴⁾.

[Note :– (1) and (3) above are in present Tamil Nādu while (2) and (4) are in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, respectively. No. (4), Yadugiri is popularly known as Tirunārāyaṇapuram and its postal name is Melkote (about 50 km from Mysore)].

YAJURVEDĪYA KĀLATRAYA SANDHYĀVANDANAM

II माध्याह्निकम् - Mādhyāhnikam

(Mid-day Session)

Same as in I above except for the following changes – *sankalpa* in section (3) to be slightly changed, as already indicated therein. Section (5) to be completely replaced as follows:

(5) माध्याह्निक तीर्थप्राशन मन्त्रः - Mādhyāhnikā tīrtha prāśana mantrah

आपः पुनन्तु पृथिवीं । पृथिवी पूता पुनातु मां ।

पुनन्तु ब्रह्मणस्पतिः ब्रह्मपूता पुनातु मां ॥

यदुच्छिष्टमभोज्यं यद्वा दुश्चरितं मम ।

सर्वं पुनन्तु मामापः असतांच प्रतिग्रहं स्वाहा ॥

Āpaḥ punantu pṛthivīm | pṛthivī pūtā punātu mām |

Punantu brahmaṇaspatiḥ brahmapūtā punātu mām ||

Yaducchiṣṭamabhojyaṁ yadvā duścaritaṁ mama |

Sarvaṁ punantu māmāpaḥ asatāṁca pratigrahaṁ svāhā ||

May the water purify my body, made up of the elements (*āpaḥ punantu pṛthivīm*) ; let my purified body (*pūtā pṛthivī*) sanctify me (*mām punantu*) ; let the water (*āpaḥ*) purify me directly also (*mām punantu*) ; may the Supreme

Lord, the sovereign Master, propitiated by the veda (or the Supreme Master of Brahma) (*Brahmaṇaspatiḥ*), the Sanctifier of the veda (*Brahmapūtā*), purify me (*mām punātu*) ; may the Lord rid me of all the impurities tainting me (*sarvaṁ mām āpaḥ punātu*), due to my eating the remnants of food, not fit to be taken as well as prohibited items of food (in terms of the restraints imposed by the śāstras) (*abhojyaṁ yat ucchiṣṭaṁ*); acquisition of the ill-gotten things of the wicked, to be studiously eschewed in accordance with the śāstraik injunctions (*asatām ca pratigrahaṁ*).

In section (9) *Gāyatri mantra japa*, replace 'prātaḥ sandhyā' with 'mādhyāhṇika' to read 'mādhyāhṇika Gāyatri mantra japam karisyē'.

Similarly, in section (10) *Gāyatri udvāsana mantraḥ*, instead of 'Prātaḥ sandhyā', substitute 'mādhyāhṇika' to read 'mādhyāhṇika Gāyatri upasthānaṁ karisyē'.

(11) माध्याह्निकोपस्थान मन्त्रः - Mādhyāhṇikōpastāna mantraḥ

This section is to be completely replaced, as follows:

आसत्येन रजसा वर्तमानो निवेशयन्नमृतं मर्त्यञ्च । हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेनादेवोयाति
भुवनाविपश्यन् ॥

उद्वयं तमसस्परि पश्यन्तो ज्योतिरुत्तरम् । देवं देवत्रा सूर्यमगन्मज्योति रुत्तमम् । उदुत्यं
जातवेदसं देवं वहन्ति केतवः दृशेविश्वाय सूर्यम् ॥

चित्रं देवानामुदगादनीकं चक्षुर्मित्रस्य वरुणस्याग्नेः । आप्रा द्यावापृथिवी अन्तरिक्षं सूर्यं
आत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च । तच्चक्षुर्देवहितं पुरस्तात्चुक्र मुच्चरत् ॥

पश्येम शरदश्शतम् । जीवेम शरदश्शतम् । नन्दाम शरदश्शतम् । मोदाम शरदश्शतम् ।
भवाम शरदश्शतम् । शृणवाम शरदश्शतम् । प्रब्रवाम शरदश्शतम् । अजीतास्याम
शरदश्शतम् । ज्योक्च सूर्यदृशे ॥

य उदगान्महतोऽर्णवात् विभ्राजमानस्सरिरस्य मध्यात् । स मावृषभो रोहिताक्षस्सूर्यो
विपश्चिन् मनसापुनातु ॥

*Āsatyena rajasā vartamāno niveśayannamṛtaṁ martyañca | hiranyayena savitā
rathenādevoyāti bhuvanāvipaśyan ॥*

*Udvayaṁ tamasaspari paśyanto jyotiruttaram | Devaṁ devatrā sūryamaganma
jyotiruttaram | Udutyam jātavedasam devaṁ vahanti ketavaḥ drśe viśvāya
sūryam ॥*

*Citraṁ devānāṁ udagādanīkaṁ cakṣurmitrasya varuṇasyāgneḥ | āprā
dyāvāprthivī antarikṣaṁ sūrya ātmā jagatastasthuṣaśca | taccakṣurdevahitaṁ
purastātcukra muccarat ||*

*Paśyema śaradaśśataṁ | jīvema śaradaśśataṁ | nandāma śaradaśśataṁ |
modāma śaradaśśataṁ | bhavāma śaradaśśataṁ | śruṇavāma śaradaśśataṁ |
prabravāma śaradaśśataṁ | ajītāsyāma śaradaśśataṁ | jyokca sūryamdrśé ||*

*Ya udagānmahato arṇavāt vibhrājamānassarirasya madhyāt | sa māvrṣabho
rohitākṣassūryo vipāścīn manasāpunātu ||*

[Note :— The mantras, commencing with पश्येम शरदश्शतं (*paśyema śaradaśśataṁ*) and ending with ज्योक्च सूर्यद्रिशे (*jyokca sūryamdrśé*), should be uttered, viewing the sun through the aperture, formed by interlocking the fingers of both the hands and twisting them a bit into what is technically known as 'vyoma mudra']

I propitiate the Creator of the universe (*savitā devaḥ*), ever in conjunction with the eternal land (*nityavibhūti*), above mutation of any kind and its antithesis, the sporting world (*līlā vibhūti*) under the spell of 'rajas' with its admixture of impurities (*satyena rajasā āvartamānaḥ*), mounted on Garuḍa, the elite vehicle (*hiranyayēna rathena*), who moves watchfully around (*bhuvanā vipāśyan āyati*), with a view to granting Mokṣa (*amṛtaṁ*), to the yearning devotees (*mumukṣus*) and the lesser fruits, sought by the other mortals, still unevolved and hence, earth-bound, sense-buried (*martyaṅca*) ; the Lord, beaming forth, in all resplendence, in the exalted heaven, beyond the periphery of the material worlds (*ut tamasaḥ uttaraṁ jyotiḥ*) is the Supreme Deva, extending His benevolent protection to the other devas and ordaining their respective functions (*devaṁ devatrā sūryaṁ*); we, who behold (*vayam paripaśyantah*) that Superior Light (*uttamaṁ jyotiḥ*), Nārāyaṇā, have taken refuge in Him (*aganmaḥ*) ; that Venerable Deva, who is the source of all effulgence, from whom the Sun derives light (*udutyam sūryaṁ*), the propagator of the vedas (*jāta vedasaṁ*) whom the eminent souls sustain (through constant contemplation) in their hearts (*ketavaḥ udvahanti*) for the sake of envisioning the entire universe (*viśvāya drśé*) ; that Paramātmā from whom (*saḥ sūryaḥ*) the wonderful army for the protection of the Devas (*citraṁ anīkaṁ devānāṁ*) came into being (*udagāt*) is very dear to the Devās, Sūrya (*mitra*), Varuṇa, and Agni like unto the eyes (*cakṣur mitraśya varuṇasyāgneḥ*) ; He is the inner soul (*antaryāmi*), dwelling inside all things and beings, mobile and stationary, in the universe (*jagataḥ tasthuṣaḥ ca ātmā*) ; He is pervading the upper worlds, the Earth and intervening space (*dyāvā prthivī antarikṣaṁ*

āprāḥ) ; that Lord who is dear to one and all like unto the eye (*tat cakṣuḥ*), the great Benefactor of the devās (*deva hitaṁ*), who is immaculate (*śukraṁ*), is moving in front of us in His incarnate form (*purastāt uccarat*).

May we behold you over a period of hundred (many, many) years (*paśyema śaradaśśataṁ*) ; may we live a hundred (several) years (to sing your glory, as an end in itself) (*jīvema śaradaśśataṁ*) ; may we revel in the enjoyment of yourself, the perennial spring of perpetual bliss, for hundreds of years (*nandāma śaradaśśataṁ*) ; may we delight in the company of your devotees (*bhāgavatās*) for many, many years (*modāma śaradaśśataṁ*) ; may we feel our existence worth its while, over hundred (many long) years, through the enjoyment (service) of yourself and your devotees (*bhavāma śaradaśśataṁ*) ; may we enlighten and entertain ourselves over a hundred years, listening to the narrations, proclaiming your glory and grandeur, your auspicious attributes and breath-taking exploits (*śruṇavāma śaradaśśataṁ*) ; may our tongues be harnessed to their intended purpose of chanting the scriptures and discoursing on your unrivalled greatness and grandeur for many, many years, quelling, side by side, the heresies of the ungodly who deny your very existence (*prabhavāma śaradaśśataṁ*) ; pray, let us always remain invincible without tasting defeat at the hands of the ungodly and heretics and without being conquered by our unruly senses (*ajītāsyāma śaradaśśataṁ*) ; may we comprehend through the mind's eye (*dr̥ṣe*) the Lord who animates the actions of His creatures (*sūryaṁ*) over long years (*jyok ca*).

May that Lord who took incarnations from the seat of His creative activity, the milk ocean (*Tiruppārkaḍal*) (*yaḥ mahataḥ āṇavāt udagāt*) and still continues to reside in the middle of that ocean (*śarirasya madhyāt vibhrajamānaḥ*), the exalted One with lovely lotus eyes (*vṛṣabhaḥ rohitākṣaḥ*), the Primordial Force ushering the universe (*sūryaḥ*), the all knowing (*vipaścīt*) sanctify me, turning His mind on me (*mā punātu manasā*).

YAJURVEDĪYA KĀLATRAYA SANDHYĀVANDANAM**III सायं सन्ध्यावन्दनम् – Sāyam Sandhyāvandanam**

(Evening Session – at Sun-set)

(Note :The practicant should face west except when doing *ācamana*, which must be done facing either east or north).

Same as in I above except for the following changes : In *sankalpa* under sections (3), (9) & (10), substitute सायं सन्ध्या – *Sāyam Sandhyām* for प्रातः सन्ध्या – *Prātaḥ Sandhyām*.

(5) सायं तीर्थप्राशन मन्त्रः – Sāyam tīrthapraśana mantraḥ

अग्निश्च मा मनुश्च मनुपतयश्च मनुकृतेभ्यः । पापेभ्यो रक्षन्तां । यदह्ना पापमकार्षम् । मनसा वाचा हस्ताभ्यां । पद्भ्यामुदरेण शिश्ना । अहस्तदवलुम्पतु यत्किञ्च दुरितं मयि । इदमहं माममृत यो नौ सत्ये ज्योतिषि जुहोमि स्वाहा ॥

Agniśca mā manyuśca manyupatayaśca manyukṛtebhyaḥ | pāpebhyo rakṣantām | yadahna pāpamakārṣam | manasā vācā hastābhyām padbhyām udareṇa śiśnā | ahastadavalumpatu yatkiñca duritaṁ mayi | idamaham māmamṛta yo nou satye jyotiṣi juhomi svāhā ||

[This Mantra is the same as for the morning session except for the following four changes (see words underlined above)].

(i) Agniśca (in place of *Sūryaśca*) – Agniḥ could mean either the Supreme Lord as the in-dweller of the element 'Agni', or it could directly refer to the Lord as the one who does the 'agranayanaṁ', that is, who leads us on to our ultimate goal.

(ii) *Yadahñā* (in place of *yadrātryā*) – by day (i.e. may I be absolved of whatever sin was committed by day).

(iii) *Ahastadavalumpatu* (in place of *rātristadavalumpatu*) – ‘ahas’ means day (let my sins be wiped out by the Supreme Deity, ordaining the time-factor of ‘day’).

(iv) *Satye jyotisi* (in place of *sūrye jyotiṣi*) – *Satye* means the Supreme Brahman (*satyaṁ jñānaṁ anantaṁ Brahma*) – the phrase means ‘the resplendent Lord’.

(11) सायमुपस्थान मन्त्रः – *Sāyamupasthāna mantraḥ*

[This mantra is entirely different from those of the morning and midday sessions. However, the portions commencing with सन्ध्यायै नमः – *Sandhyāyai namaḥ* are common to all the three sessions].

इमं मे वरुण श्रुधीहवमद्याच मृडय । त्वामवस्युराचके ॥⁽¹⁾

तत्वायामि ब्रह्मणा वन्दमानस्तदाशास्ते यजमानो हविर्भिः ।

अहेडमानो वरुणेहबोध्युरुशंस मा न आयुः प्रमोषीः ॥⁽²⁾

यच्चिद्धि ते विशो यथा प्रदेव वरुण व्रतं । मिनीमसि द्यविद्यवि ॥⁽³⁾

यत्किञ्चेदं वरुण दैव्ये जनेभिद्रोहं मनुष्याचरामसि ।

अचित्ती यत्तवधर्मा युयोपिम मानस्तस्मादेनसो देव रीरिषः ॥⁽⁴⁾

कितवासो यद्रिरिपुर्नदीवि यद्वाघा सत्यमुत यन्नविद्य

सर्वाता विष्य शिथिरेव देवाथाते स्याम वरुणप्रियासः ॥⁽⁵⁾

Imaṁ me varuṇa śrudhīhavamadyāca mṛḍaya | tvāmavasyurācake ॥⁽¹⁾

tattvāyāmi brahmaṇā vandamānastadāśāste yajamāno havirbhiḥ |

Ahedamāno varuṇehabodhyurusamsa mā na āyuhḥ pramoṣīḥ ॥⁽²⁾

Yacciddhi te viśo yathā pradeva varuṇa vratam | minīmasi dyavidyavi ॥⁽³⁾

Yatkiñcedam varuṇa daivye janebhidroham manuśyāscarāmasi |

Acittī yattavadharmā yuyopima mānastasmādenaso deva rīriṣaḥ ॥⁽⁴⁾

Kitavāso yadriripurnadīvi yadvāghā satyamuta yannavidma

sarvātā viṣya śithireva devāthāte syāma varuṇapriyāsaḥ ॥⁽⁵⁾

This comprises five *Riks* (mantras) ; the end of each mantra is denoted by double strokes (||) and also marked (1), (2), (3), (4), and (5). The first three mantras are attributed to ‘Śunaśśepha’ ṛṣi (also known as Devarātar) ; the fourth and fifth are attributed to sages Vaśiṣṭha and Atri, respectively. The *chandās* (metre) for the first and third is *Gāyatri*, while that for (2), (4) & (5), is *tristup* ; the *Devata* (deity) is, however, one and the same, namely,

the Paramātmā, the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Internal Controller, the In-dweller of Varuṇa and all else (*antaryāmi*) although, on the face of it, it is a supplication to the deity, named, Varuṇa. In the first three mantras, attributed to Śunaśśepha, he invokes the grace of the Supreme Lord for being let off alive without being sacrificed at the altar (the *yūpa sthamba*) to which he stood tethered in a *yajñā* which was being performed, no less than his own father (officiating as a *ritvik*) getting near him with sword in hand, ready to chop off the son's head.

In the long lineage of the Ikṣvāku dynasty of yore there was a king, by name, Hariścandra who remained childless even though he had as many as a hundred wives. As advised by sage Vasiṣṭha, the king propitiated Varuṇa for begetting a son, volunteering to sacrifice that very son, sometime later, in a *yajñā* to be performed for propitiation of Varuṇa (literally returning the latter's gift). The King was blessed with a son, named 'Lohita', all right, but Varuṇa demanded his 'pound of flesh' after some years, reminding Hariścandra of the promise made by him, earlier on, to give back the son to the deity as a sacrificial offering. By mutual consent, the dreaded event was put off till after the *upanayanam* of Lohita. However, when Lohita was told, at the appropriate time, by his father regarding the latter's commitment to the Deity, he grew defiant and fled to the forest. Therefore, the revengeful Varuṇa penalised the King by afflicting him with dropsy (bloated tummy). Five years later, Lohita managed to buy off Śunaśśepha, the middle one of the three sons of a greedy Ṛṣi, by name, Ajigarttar, in exchange for a hundred cows. Lohita's plan to have Śunaśśepha sacrificed instead of himself worked well, as both Hariścandra and Varuṇa gave clearance to it. Well, Hariścandra was cured of his fell malady and the *yāga* was also launched.

And here we are at the critical juncture in the course of the *yajñā*, where poor Śunaśśepha Ṛṣi is tied to the sacrificial post and the axe is about to fall on him. No wonder, the poor victim, vicariously tethered to the post in place of prince Lohita, turns to Lord Hari, the unfailing Saviour whom one will do well to meditate upon, in a dire situation like this. At the same time, it is noteworthy that Śunaśśepha did not couch the prayer in his own language but he acquired, through his *tapas*, the appropriate vedik diction for the said prayer. There is also another version, namely, that Śunaśśepha fell at the feet of Sage Viśvāmitra who was present there as a *Hotā* (होता) and acquired from him the mantras for the supplication, in question. What is more, eventually, Śunaśśepha, not only secured longevity, duly released from the current entanglement but was also adopted by Sage Viśvāmitra, as his son.

This episode finds mention in *Bahvr̥ca Brāh̥maṇam*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (chapters 7 & 16 of the IX skanda) and *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇam* (sargās 61 & 62 of Bāla Kāṇḍa). There is, however, substantial variation in the account contained in *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇam*. The name of the King has been mentioned as Ambarīśa, who bought Śunaśśepha for being sacrificed in place of the animal tied, earlier on, to the sacrificial post, which disappeared from the spot due to the machination of Indra. Gōvinda Rājar, the celebrated commentator of *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*, has affirmed that Ambarīśa was yet another name of Hariścandra, but has chosen to keep silent in regard to the other variations, noticed in the *Rāmāyaṇa* version of the episode. In any case, only the unenviable plight of Śunaśśepha and his invocation of the Supreme Lord's grace are relevant here. Let us now proceed to study what has been conveyed in these mantras.

Riḥ 1) :- May you, O, Supreme Lord, the internal Controller of Varuṇa (and all else), listen to this prayer of mine (*Varuṇa, me imam̄ havam̄ śrudhi*) ; right now (*adya ca*), make me feel happy (released from my present bondage) (*mām̄ mṛḍaya*) ; I beseech You, seeking Your protection (*tvām̄ avasyuḥ ācake*).

Riḥ 2) :- For the sake of my longevity (*tat*), I take refuge (*yāmi*) in You (*tvām̄*) (Acyuta, the unfailing saviour), making obeisance to you and singing your glory in vedik diction (*brahmaṇā vandamānaḥ*). It is for an identical purpose, namely, securing (desiring) the longevity of his son (*tadāśāste*), the King makes the sacrificial offering (*yajamānaḥ havirbhiḥ*); O, Lord (Varuṇa, the worship-worthy) ! may you grant my request, right now and here (*iha bodhi*), without getting angry with me for going against the wishes of the host (king) (*ahedaṃānaḥ*), O, adorable Lord (*uruśam̄sa*) ! do not snatch away our lives (neither my life nor that of prince Lohita who got me sold to him for a price nor that of the King, hosting this *yajña* substituting me for his son) (*naḥ āyuh̄ mā pramoṣiḥ*)

Riḥ 3) :- O, Lord, adorable by one and all (*he ! Deva Varuṇa*) ! Even I, endowed with knowledge (*cit hi*), have skipped, day by day (*dyavidyavi*), the duties enjoined on us by You, as laid down in the śāstras (*yat te vratam̄ praminīmasi*), like the creatures, devoid of reasoning (*viśo yathā*), and thus offended you.

Riḥ 4) :- (In this fourth mantra, attributed to Vasiṣṭa, the Lord's forgiveness is sought for the offence thrown at His devotees (*Bhāgavatāpacārās*, far more cruel than the direct affront to Bhagavān, referred to in mantra (3) above).

O, Lord, may it please you not to torment us (*mā naḥ rīṣaḥ*) for the sins, big and small (*kiñca*), committed by us, base men (*manuṣyāḥ*), such as doing a great deal of harm to your devotees (*daivye jane yat idaṁ abhidrohaṁ carāmasi*), flouting, out of ignorance (*acitti*), the decrees and injunctions, imposed on us by the scriptures which are but your commands (*tava dharmā yat yuyopima*) and the like (*tasmāt enasaḥ*).

Riḥ 5) :- (In this concluding *Riḥ*, attributed to Sage Atri, the Lord's forgiveness is sought in respect of transgressions, committed knowingly as well as those incidental to one's association with the vicious and the wicked).

O ! highly adorable Lord Vāsudeva (*Deva Varuṇa*) ! May You drive out from us (*viṣya*) sins, tagged on to us, due to our involvement in vices like gambling, in the company of the wicked (*dīvi kitavāsaḥ naḥ yat aghā riripuh*) as well as sins, committed deliberately (*yadvā satyaṁ*) and unknowingly (*uta yat na vidma*) and, in short, sins of all kinds (*sarvāḥ tāḥ*) ; thereafter, may we become your favourites, dear to you (*te priyāsaḥ syāma*).

The rest of the portions are as in Section (1) except that in the salutations to the directions under sub-heading (12), Abhivādana, the order of first four directions to be cyclically changed to read प्रतीच्यै दिशे नमः – *praticyai diśe namaḥ*, उदीच्यै दिशे नमः – *udicyai diśe namaḥ*, प्राच्यै दिशे नमः – *pracyai diśe namaḥ*, दक्षिणायै दिशे नमः – *dakṣiṇāyai diśe namaḥ*.

APPENDIX

Prostration and Abhivādana

Sāṣṭāṅga Praṇāmaṁ unto elders, that is, prostration at the feet of one's parents, preceptors and other elderly persons due to be venerated – the entire body (frontal) from head to foot touching the ground was a regular feature, an inherent habit in everyone in the olden days. This was automatically followed by *Abhivādana* (अभिवादन). Doing so was never considered beneath one's dignity. On the other hand, the practicant stood to gain a great deal, a plethora of benefits accruing from the blessings of these elders such as long life, strength (both physical and mental), renown, wealth, sound progeny etc. While chanting the *Abhivādana mantra*, the practicant should close his right and left carlobes with the respective palms and utter the mantras, audibly enough and, at the end, bend towards the feet of the elder, resting the palms, kept open over the wrists crosswise. These days, the youngsters have, however, deviated from the time-honoured tradition to such an extent that they fight shy of bowing before the elders and need external compulsion of sorts by the near and dear ones on ceremonial occasions to offer their namaskāras to the elders around, in the aforesaid manner. In any case, it is an integral part of *Sandhyāvandana*. The *Abhivādana* to be performed has been indicated in the appropriate place in the body of the text. Here are more details of the same.

The mantra runs, as follows:

अभिवादये (1) त्रयार्षय प्रवारान्वित (2)
 गोत्रः (3) सूत्रः (4)
 शाखाध्यायी (5) शर्मानामाहमस्मिभोः

Abhivādaye (1) trayārṣaya pravārānvita (2)
 gotraḥ (3) sūtraḥ (4) śākhādhyāyī
 (5) śarmānāmāhamasmibhoḥ

(1) प्रवरम् (*Pravaram*)-This enumerates the Ṛṣīs from whom the practicant is descended. The table below contains these particulars in respect of some of the *gotrās*. The *pravaras* in the case of other *gotrās* may be ascertained from the concerned elders.

Sl. No.	Gotram	Pravaram
1.	Bhāradvāja	Āngīrasa, Bhāraspatya, Bharadvāja.
2.	Ātreya	Ātreya, Ārchanānasa, Syāvāsva.
3.	Vādhūla	Bhārgava, Vaidatavya, Sāvedasa.
4.	Śrīvatsa	Bhārgava, Cyavana, Āplavāna, Aurava, Jāmadagnya.
5.	Kauśika	Viśvāmitra, Āgamaṣana, Kauśika.
6.	Kaundinya	Vasiṣṭha, Maitriāvaruṇa, Kauṇḍinya.
7.	Hārīta	Āngīrasa, Pārmyasva, Maudgalya.
8.	Kāśyapa	Kāśyapa, Āvatsāra, Daivala.
9.	Naidruva Kāśyapa	Kāśyapa, Āvatsāra, Naidruva.
10.	Ṣaḍamarṣana	Āngīrasa, Paurukutsa, Trāsatasya.
11.	Gargi	Āngīrasa, Bhāraspatya, Bhāradvāja, Sainya, Gārgya.

Note:- (1) The *Pravara* comprises mostly of three Ṛṣīs while, in some such as sl.nos (4) and (11) above, there are five Ṛṣīs. In the latter case, *Pañchārṣaya* should be substituted for *trayārṣaya* in the text of the mantra.

(2) गोत्रः (*gotra*) – one's own *gotra* which would match in the *pravara*(1) as in the table.

(3) सूत्र(*sūtra*) – the Ṛṣīs of yore have indicated in the respective *sūtrās* the manner of performing the rituals, enjoined under these *śākhās*. They are, as follows.

Rg Veda Sūtrās – (1) Aśvalāyana Sūtra; (2) Kātyāyana Sūtra.

Yajurveda Sūtrās – (1) Āpastamba Sūtra; (2) Bodhāyana sūtra.

Sāma Veda Sūtrās – (1) Trāhyāyaṇi Sūtra; (2) Raṇāyaṇi Sūtra.

(4) शाखा (*śākhā*) is the particular branch of the veda, namely, Ṛg, Yajur or Sāma, followed traditionally by the practicant's forebears in terms of the rituals enjoined under each.

(5) नाम(*Nāma*) – Scriptures have enjoined that one's personal name should be auspicious for a Brahmin, indicative of valour for a Kṣatriya, indicative of wealth to a Vaiśya and indicative of service to a Śūdra and should end with śarma for a Brahmin, varma for a Kṣatriya, gupta for a Vaiśya, and dāsa for a Śūdra.

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