

सन्ध्यावन्दनम्
Sandhyā-Vandanam
A Vedic Meditation on the Supreme Reality

Dr. K. Aravinda Rao

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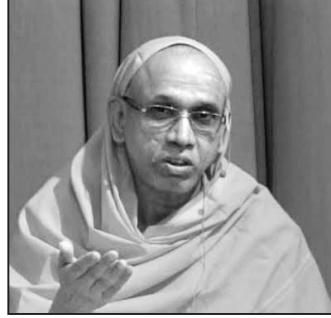
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e-mail : emescovja@gmail.com

Dedicated to
the loving memory of
Sri Bhaskara Lakshmi Narasappa,
a humble yogi,
my paternal grand-father

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Blessings from
Pujya Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam



Sandhya Vandanam is nitya karma, a daily duty of worship that must be performed by all of us at all times without fail. I know a few great scholars who performed this act of worship with devotion all their life to the extent that they perform the Sandhya Vandanam one last time before discarding the mortal frame. This daily duty should be performed by all people conscious of and devoted to that Higher Power, irrespective of their caste, creed, race and religion and of course, irrespective of gender, because this worship, addressed to the impersonal Godhead in the solar orb, is universal containing the essence of all religious traditions of the mankind.

I used to entertain a notion that the police job is not entirely suited to people of sattvic disposition. This ill-conceived notion was, in a way, responsible for my abandoning a nice police job in my youth. I mention it here only to assert that the notion was indeed wrong. Here is before us Sri Aravinda Rao, a scholar of very

sattvic mind, a retired police officer, proving the above mentioned notion wrong. He is not only a good scholar of Sanskrit, Vedanta and Hindu Studies but also a good teacher of Vedanta and Hindu dharma. He has intense enthusiasm to teach this timeless vision of the ancient seers to the modern youth and he devoted his entire time for this sacred cause.

Sri Aravinda Rao is a prolific author. Many a useful book on topics of Hindu dharma and Vedanta has come out of his pen. Here is another gem of the same genre. I wish him well in his endeavour to educate the modern society, in particular the youth, of our ancient wisdom. May Lord Sri Krishna shower his choicest blessings on Sri Aravinda Rao in this regard.

Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

Dt.15.03.2019

Secunderabad

Introduction

I start with a request to the parent not be put off by the volume of the book which seeks to explain a simple philosophical meditation that takes only about 15-20 minutes to perform. This meditation was performed three times a day by our ancestors as a compulsory ritual. It would become as natural as breathing once it is understood. The present book looks big only because most of us have got disconnected from the tradition and because each and every detail of traditional knowledge has to be explained to a modern student or probably to the parent. The parent may give a fast reading to the book to get a total grasp of the topic and then go into the details. What encourages me to write the book is the happy revival of interest in the young generation to know our cultural roots.

The whole text cannot and need not be explained to the young boy who undergoes the ceremony of *upanayanam*, in which he gets the sacred thread on his body and which entitles him to do the ritual. He would then learn the *mantra*-s by rote and perform the meditation as a ritual. At best its broad meaning can be explained to him by the parent. Its philosophical meaning would slowly sink into the mind as the child grows, much like what the doctors call the time release capsules which release the medicine slowly.

This book deals with the *Sandhya-vandanam* (SV hereafter) according to the *Yajur-Veda* tradition, thus intended for the people of that sect. There are some minor variations in the SV meant for the

persons belonging to the *Rig-Veda*, *Sama-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda* sects but the underlying philosophy is same for all the versions of the *SV*. There may be regional variations of minor nature even for the *SV* of *Yajur-Veda*, which do not matter much.

My emphasis in the present book is on explaining the philosophical significance of the meditation which is needed for an intelligent understanding of the ritual. I have not dwelt much on the ritualistic aspect of it. Hence, I have explained the fundamentals of Indian philosophy (Vedanta) wherever needed.

Managing and mentoring human activity has been a very important task for the religious leaders of all societies. Human activity consists of both good and bad actions. The good activities are those which are welcomed by others while bad actions are those which disturb the social tranquillity by causing pain to others. Scriptures prohibit bad actions and commend that a person should pursue good actions.

Even as one pursues socially approved actions, one may be absorbed in selfish, worldly, material pursuits throughout one's life and may totally be unaware of any higher goal in life. As a result, a person is happy when he succeeds, sad when he loses and thus gets drifted by success or failure and is tossed between joy and sorrow, between love and hate, between likes and dislikes and many such dualities. Philosophers examine this human predicament and try to suggest how happiness can be brought into the life of a human being. A great discovery in philosophy is that happiness is derived not from material gains but from understanding human nature and from understanding the basic goals of human life.

Most human knowledge is related to the world we see but very little is about the human being himself. The ancient Indian sages tried to examine the question 'Who am I' and arrived at the answer

that the human being is essentially divine in nature. The human being is however, not aware of his divine nature and conducts himself guided by natural instincts, desires, greed, ambition etc. In such background, how to make a person realize his nature? For this, the Vedic sages evolved various meditative practices and prescribed them as essential daily duties and rituals.

The ritual named *Sandhya-vandanam* is one such. It is prescribed as a compulsory daily duty (*nitya-karma*) which a person is expected to do three times a day. It is not a prayer in the usual sense of the word. A prayer is usually to some deity, staying high above in heaven, seeking his or her help for achieving material gain. Unlike this, *SV* is less of a prayer and more of a reminder about one's own divine nature. It is expected to be done three times a day, which means that a person reminds himself about his divine nature three times a day and goes out with such awareness to perform his worldly activities. When his own nature is divine, it follows that all fellow beings, all living beings are also divine and that they have to be treated with great love as one does to oneself. The message of the *Gita* is essentially the same. With such vision a person's actions are bound to be righteous. Thus, *SV* is a great exercise in internal purification and promotes righteous actions in the society.

I make no claims to have made any thorough research on the topic, as my objective is merely to explain its importance to the modern student.

Sri Sayanacharya, in his commentary on the Vedas, has commented on the mantras of the *SV* which mostly occur in the *Taittiriya Aranyakam*. This forms the basis for later commentators. A well-known commentary on the *Yajur-Veda SV* is available in Sanskrit, written by SriKrishna Pandita. Not much is known about him but he could be a scholar not of very distant past. His book

explains the philosophical message of *SV* and also lays emphasis on the meticulous performance of the ritualistic aspect. Another Sanskrit commentary by Vedanti Sitarama Sastri, was published by the Sri Balamanorama Press, Mylapore, Madras in the year 1931. This writer too has largely followed Sri Sayanacharya's line. I have mostly followed these three texts in explaining the procedures, mantras and their significance.

I have no authority either to abridge or simplify the procedure, for which many people ask. I however, have marked some sections with asterisks (*) in the increasing order of importance, strictly following what is mentioned in the traditional commentaries about those sections. This gives scope for the modern student to identify his own time, place and method, keeping in mind the spirit of philosophical meditation.

I offer my salutations at the feet of Pujya Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (of Swami Dayananda Saraswati) for perusing the book and for giving his blessings for the book.

In order to give the word to word meaning from Sanskrit to English the order of words need to be changed totally in order to fit into the syntax of English language. This can confuse the reader who is looking for the original words in the text. Hence, I have followed the word order as in the Sanskrit text and I have given the meaning of the verse/mantra at the end.

Abbreviations used:

Tai.Ar – *Taittiriya Aranyakam*

MNU – *Maha Narayanopanishad*

D.Bh – *Devi bhagavatam*

SV – *Sandhya Vandanam*

SKP – Srikrishna Pandita

VSS – Vedanti Sitarama Sastri

Important - *

Very important - **

Transliteration key

The International Alphabet for Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) has been used to denote the Sanskrit words which are in Devanagari script. IAST is the most widely used key, which is also explained on the web. A brief table is given. However, it is advised to learn the exact sounds from a teacher.

अ	a	as in <i>sun</i>	क	K	<i>cut/kite</i>	ट	ṭa	<i>touch</i>
आ	ā	<i>Bald</i>	ख	kha	<i>Book-house,</i> 'k' com- bined with aspiration 'h'	ठ	ṭha	<i>anthill</i>
इ	i	<i>Bit</i>	ग	Ga	<i>Gun</i>	ड	ḍa	<i>Dull</i>
ई	ī	<i>Beat</i>	घ	gha	<i>Pig-head,</i> the sound 'g' in 'gun' with aspiration 'h'.	ढ	ḍha	<i>Godhead,</i> aspiration as above
उ	u	<i>Put</i>	ङ	ṅa	<i>Lung</i>	ण	ṇa	<i>under</i> (retroflex)
ऊ	ū	<i>Tool</i>	च	Ca	<i>Chunk</i>	त	Ta	<i>Path</i>

ऋ	r̥	<i>Rhythm</i>	छ	cha	<i>catch-hold</i>	थ	tha	The sound 'th' in 'thumb' combined with aspiration 'h'
ए	e	<i>Date</i>	ज	Ja	<i>Jug</i>	द	Da	<i>Then</i>
ऐ	ai	<i>Might</i>	झ	Jha	<i>Hedgehog,</i> 'j' with aspiration	ध	dha	The sound 'th' in 'thus' plus aspiration
ओ	o	<i>Oat</i>	ञ	Ña	<i>Bunch</i>	न	Na	<i>Number</i>
औ	au	<i>Out</i>						

प	pa	<i>Pot</i>	य	Ya	<i>Yet</i>	ष	ṣa	<i>shun</i>
फ	pha	<i>Soup-hunt,</i> aspiration as above	र	Ra	<i>Run</i>	स	Sa	<i>Sun</i>
ब	ba	<i>But</i>	ल	La	<i>Love</i>	ह	ha	<i>Hall</i>
भ	bha	<i>Abhor,</i> aspiration as above	व	Va	<i>Voice</i>	क्ष	kṣa, combines the 'k' in 'king' with the sound 'sh' in <i>Shaw</i>	<i>Rikshaw</i>
म	ma	<i>Much</i>	श	Śa	<i>Sat</i>	ज्ञ	Jña	

1

Preliminaries

1.1. The meaning of *Sandhyā*:

The word *sandhyā* has been explained in many ways. The important one is relating to time. The time of intersection of night and day is the dawn. This is a *sandhi*, a joint. Similarly, the time of intersection of day and night is the dusk, which is another *sandhi*. In between, during the day, there is a point of transition of Sun from the eastern part of the sky to the western part. This is counted as another *sandhi*. A meditation performed at this time is *sandhyā*. At these three intersections a person is expected to perform the *SV*.

Another meaning for *SV* is *saṃ samyak dhyāyati asyām iti*, which means that it is the finest meditation to be done by a person. What is the nature of meditation here? Prayers are normally by way of beseeching the deities for various favors whereas this prayer is of the form of meditation in which there is no seeking but a reminder about one's own divine nature. It is a self-ennobling and self-purifying exercise. The main *mantra* which is contemplated upon is the Gayatri *mantra*.

Another meaning for the word *sandhi* is explained as *bhruvor-ghrāṇasya yaḥ sandhiḥ*, the meeting point of the two eye brows and the bridge of the nose. In yoga literature, this is said to the point on which the student has to focus his eyes. This is to stop the motion of eye balls and thus consciously bring the mind under control. Krishna also talks about this in the *Gīta* (6-13). The idea is not to concentrate on the nose but to concentrate on the meaning of the Gayatri *mantra* while restraining the mind from wandering.

The word *vandanam* literally means *saluting* or *worshipping*. Thus, the entire word *Sandhyā vandanam* means worship at a particular time or meditating intensely.

1.2. The uniqueness of Gayatri *mantra*

Sage Viswamitra also known as Kausika (those belonging to Kausika gotra may take pride), was the person who envisioned the Gayatri *mantra*. Viswamitra is in fact the most dominant character in the *Bala-kanda* of the *Ramayanam* wherein we find frequent mention of *SV*.

Gayatri is the most important *mantra* in *SV*. It is a unique *mantra* because it is not about any request to any deity but because it is in the nature of an acknowledgement of the divine which is our inherent nature. It is about acknowledging the Supreme Consciousness which illumines the minds of all beings and make them appear as sentient. The *beings* include not only humans but all living beings starting from the insects to elephants. The same consciousness, which we call *paramātma*, dwells in the minds of all the beings. The Gayatri *mantra* is a reminder of the divine nature of all beings, not merely your countrymen, not merely persons of your religion or region or caste or colour. Such exercise, over a period of time, enables a person to handle any situation, either in the personal life or in social transactions, in the right perspective, with courage and fortitude and not get dispirited by any adversity. Thus it is a meditation which gives the strength of mind and strength of character by impacting our life style and attitude to life.

1.3. Who is the deity meditated upon in *SV*?

SV is a compilation of some select Vedic *mantra*-s which are arranged to form an independent ritual with some prescribed procedures.

In the *SV* we find Vedic *mantra*-s addressing Mithra, the Sun god who is male and those addressing goddess Gayatri who is female. In addition, there are several verses selected from different

texts which are in later day Sanskrit. These seem to have been added by devotees of various regions at various points of time depending on their preferences. We may not take into consideration these later verses but we have to examine the Vedic *mantra*-s relating to Mithra and to Gayatri.

A comprehensive picture of Vedic meditations is given in the Annexure-II. The student is advised to peruse it at this juncture. In most meditations the objective is to realize the Supreme Reality, called Brahman, in the *Upanishads*. As it is difficult to meditate directly on Brahman the *Upanishads* have devised different meditations on some intermediate manifestation of divinity. For instance, the Sun is a glorious manifestation in the universe and he is the life force for all living beings on earth. Hence the *Upanishads* start with meditation on Sun and gradually train the student to meditate on the Supreme Reality which is manifesting as the Sun and also manifesting as the entire universe including the student himself.

At the ordinary level, *SV* appears to be a meditation on the Sun. But the *mantra* in step 11 of *SV* clarifies:

“A wise seeker meditating on the morning Sun and on the evening Sun, contemplating that the Sun is Brahman, would attain all auspiciousness. Such seeker, himself being Brahman all the while, would realize his nature as Brahman”.

Another verse in step 3 of *SV* says that *SV* is a meditation on Brahman and not on any deity. This vision continues in all traditional commentaries on *SV*. Sayanacharya and SKP make it clear throughout the text that the meditation is on the Supreme Brahman through the medium of Mithra, the Sun god.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* says, *sa yaścāyaṃ puruṣe aśvāditye sa ekaḥ* (Tai.Up.2-8-13), which means that the one Supreme Reality which is in the individual is the same that is present in Aditya, the Sun. Hence the meditation is on the Supreme Reality.

This approach is also seen in the *Aditya-Hridayam* of *Valmiki Ramayanam*. The Sun is a medium (*ālambanam* in the language of Vedanta), a symbol, through whom the all-pervading consciousness (Brahman) is meditated upon. The commentators on the *Aditya-Hridayam* have also mentioned that its objective is to attain the knowledge of Brahman.

This strategy of using an intermediate medium as a symbol to meditate upon the Supreme Reality is seen in Chapter 10 of the *Gīta* in which Lord Krishna mentions various glorious manifestations (*vibhūti*) of Brahman. Meditations on such *vibhūti*-s may not always be for the knowledge of Brahman. They may be for some worldly benefits or fulfilment of personal desires. Chapter 11 of *Gīta* takes us to a higher level of meditation in which the cosmic form of the Supreme Reality is described.

Thus, the *SV* can to be taken as a meditation on Sun at a lower level but a student exposed to Vedanta would do a more mature meditation on the Supreme Reality which is not different from the student himself.

Strictly speaking, Gayatri is the name of the *chandas* (prosody) of the *mantra* which was revealed by sage Viswamitra. The *mantra* itself is visualized as a goddess in the *puranic* literature. Meditation on Gayatri is mentioned in several *purāna*-s.

A detailed account of the meditation on Gayatri can be seen in the 11th and 12th parts of *Devi Bhagavatam*. The entire procedure of *SV* is described in the 11th part. All the verses describing the right time for *SV*, the procedure of *prāṇāyāma*, the procedure of offering waters etc., which are usually found in the commentaries on *SV* are from this text.

Chapters 4, 8 & 9 of the 12th part of *Devi Bhagavatam* describe the real meaning of Gayatri. It is not a goddess in the pantheon of the Indian gods and goddesses but it refers to the Supreme Brahman. Chapter 4 (verses 4 to 6) mentions how the student has to visualize

Gayatri. The student has to visualize that he is not distinct from the all-pervading reality, Gayatri. He has to visualize himself as Gayatri. As described in the note on *upāsanā*-s, the purpose of meditation is to achieve the vision of oneness in the universe. The student has to go beyond his limited identification with the body-mind-complex and identify himself with the universal principle, called Gayatri in this context. Chapters 8 & 9 narrate the allegorical tale of the goddess described in part 3 of the *Kenopanishad*. In this tale, gods led by Indra, become very proud of their prowess after defeating the demons. The Supreme Being, Brahman perceived the egotism of gods and appeared in front of them in a mysterious form. The gods were powerless in front of that form and they were unable to know what it was. Indra contemplated and realized that the mysterious form was the power of Brahman. This was mentioned as Gayatri in the *Devi Bhagavatam*.

A question may arise about the gender. Aditya is male and the Gayatri is female. How can both denote Brahman? In the *SV* itself (step 13.2) the invocation is in feminine and she is said to be the imperishable Brahman, which is in neuter gender. Again in (step 24) the gender of Gayatri is in masculine and also in feminine. The word *stuto-mayā* is in masculine whereas the word *veda-mātā* is in feminine. The Supreme Reality is referred to in all the genders. It is our philosophical tradition that the Reality can be worshipped either a male form or in a female form or as totally formless. Thus, both Aditya and Gayatri refer to the same Supreme Brahman.

1.4. How and when has it to be done?

Our ancients divided human actions into four categories – mandated rituals (*nitya-karma*), mandated but occasional rituals (*naimittika-karma*), rituals or actions desiring some worldly or other-worldly gain (*kāmya-karma*) and prohibited actions (*niṣiddha-karma*). *SV* is a mandated action, which was done three times a day by our ancients. The mandated but occasional actions are rituals such as those performed at the time of child-

birth, *upanayanam*, marriage etc., which can be called the rites of passage in sociological terms. The desire-driven actions are such as worship of gods or *yajña*-s seeking some benefit. If the same action is done without seeking the benefit/fruit, it is called *karma-yoga* by Krishna in the *Gita*. The prohibited actions are well known to all.

Books on *SV* talk a lot about the right time for *SV*. The mandated time in the morning is just before dawn. There is a story mentioned in the *Yajur-Veda* that the demons performed intense *tapas* and got a boon from the creator (Brahma) that they would be strong enough to fight the Sun god. Having got the boon they started fighting the Sun from morning till evening. There is only one way to drive the demons away and that is to throw waters charged with the chanting of Gayatri *mantra* towards the Sun at the time of dawn. Such waters move like weapons and drive away the demons trying to overpower the Sun and sunrise takes place.

The Vedic literature has many such stories which are meant to glorify or condemn a particular procedure. Vedic tradition itself calls such stories or statements as *artha-vāda*. The word *artha* means ‘purpose’ and *vāda* is a ‘statement’. Thus *artha-vāda* sentences are exaggerated statements keeping the purpose in mind and with an intention to enforce a particular action. Sayanacharya, the commentator on the Vedas, mentions that this story is by way of praising the importance of Gayatri. The demons are known as *mandehas*. The word is a combination of *manda* and *iha*. *Manda* means slowness and *iha* is activity. Figuratively, it means that laziness in the morning is like a demon which has to be driven away. It may also refer to base desires which are compared to demons. Anyone who gets up early, performs the *SV* during sunrise and gets into his studies has overcome laziness. Thus, the intention of the sages was perhaps to inculcate discipline in the life style of a person.

Similarly, in the evening *SV* has to be performed just before sunset, while the Sun is still seen in the sky. In the afternoon *SV* is to be performed when the Sun is in the mid-sky.

A practitioner has to complete his morning ablutions and take bath before starting the *SV*. In the morning he should sit facing East or North and in the evening he should sit facing West or North. Procedures with regard to each step of *SV* are described in various texts. Non-compliance would result in great sin, it is told. The intention of such statements is to ensure uniformity and social discipline. However, mere adherence to the letter of the text without regard to the spirit of the text is not commended. The texts themselves say that one has to know the philosophy behind the ritual.

If a person fails to do *SV* as prescribed, he is said to lose his spiritual status. However, the texts talk of performing it mentally in exceptional cases. Performing *SV* three times a day may be a great demand in the modern context. However, as the very opening verse of *SV* says, it can be performed anytime, anywhere with a pure frame of mind. We see persons of some religions performing their prayers in trains, airports etc. A similar practice can be evolved by the individual himself to suit his routine.

1.5. The tradition of *SV* in Indian society

Practice of *SV* seems to be quite ancient. All texts on *dharma* mention it as a mandatory spiritual exercise. It seems to be as old as the Vedic times. There is frequent mention of *SV* in the *Ramayana* of Valmiki. Performance of *SV* by Rama is mentioned several times by Valmiki. It was widely performed by almost all sections of society, including women. Again in the *Valmiki Ramayana*, we find that when Hanuman goes to Lanka in search of Sita, he searches all important mansions in Lanka but does not find Sita. He sits in a pensive mood and looks around. He finds a small fresh water brook near Ravana's palace and he hopes to see Sita there. He expects her to come there to perform *SV* in the morning if at all she was alive. In this context the traditional commentators on the *Ramayana* have mentioned how women too were performing *SV* during that time. In *Kadambari*, a Sanskrit romantic novel of the

7th century CE, the writer Banabhatta describes the lady Mahasweta, as wearing the sacred thread and also performing the evening *Sandhya* (Mahasweta episode in the *Kadambari*). It implies that women were performing *Sandhya* even up to the 7th century CE. It is not known when and why it was not allowed in later times. However, we see that among the followers of Arya Samaj of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, women too perform the *SV* and the fire rituals and they are well versed in Vedic studies.

We are aware of the four *varṇa*-s described in the *Gita*. They are – *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*. The first three categories – *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya* and *vaiśya* – were called the *dvijas*, the twice-born. The biological birth was the first birth and the ceremony of *upanayanam* was the second birth, because thereafter the person went to a teacher and studied scriptures. These three categories performed *SV*. In the *Ayodhya-kanda* of *Ramayana* (*sarga* 64) we see an episode in which king Dasaratha recollects an old incident which occurred early in his life. In that he had killed a young man by mistake. That young man (whose name is not mentioned in Valmiki but mentioned as Sravana in some other versions of *Ramayana*) was the son of a *śūdra* mother and a *vaiśya* father. When the son got killed, the old *vaiśya* father laments over his death exclaiming – ‘alas! Who would read out scriptures to me from now? Who, having performed the *sandhyā* and having performed the fire rituals, would sit near and serve me lovingly? (verses 32-33)’. It means that *SV* and fire rituals were performed by all sections of society in olden days.

We have to note that the concept of *varṇa* is different from what we call caste. There exist thousands of castes but there are only four *varṇa*-s. The castes depended on the occupational skills of people whereas the *varṇa* depended on the psychological makeup of a person. Krishna says that persons who had predominance of *sattva guṇa* (foot note) were Brahmins, those who had predominance of *rajo guṇa* were *kṣatriya*-s and *vaiśya*-s and those who had predominance of *tamo guṇa* were the *śūdra*-s.

The first two categories are generally well understood but the term *vaiśya* is not clear to many. Krishna defines *vaiśya* in the Gita (18-44). Farmers engaged in agriculture, cattle farmers and traders are called the *vaiśya*-s. In other words, all those who were engaged in the generation of wealth were *vaiśya*-s. This naturally included the majority of people in the society. Interestingly, Krishna himself falls in this category as he belonged to the cattle farming community and we know that he too studied Vedas along with his poor Brahmin friend Sudama.

For various sociological reasons like invasions and virulent attacks on religion, many persons in the society gave up the sacred thread because of persecution of persons wearing any *varṇa* mark. They gave up religious practices and consequently came to be known as *śūdra*-s. In spite of it we see that persons belonging to weaver and goldsmith communities do wear the sacred thread even now in villages.

The spirit of scriptures is that a lazy person is to be called a *śūdra*. Hence on the ground of laziness if the right to perform *SV* were to be denied to someone, it would be an unfair practice now. It is again the Arya Samaj which is initiating pupils of all castes into this ritual, besides teaching Vedas to them.

1.6. *Upanayanam*

Upanayanam is an important stage in a person's life. The prefix *upa* means *near* and *nayanam* means *leading*. It is a ritual leading a person to the highest truth, the knowledge of Brahman. It is a rite of passage from the stage of a lay person to the stage of a *dvija*. A person then becomes eligible for the study of the *Vedas*. A well-known verse says:

janmanā jāyate śūdraḥ karmaṇā jāyate dvijaḥ
vedapāṭhena vipraḥsyāt brahmajñānena brāhmaṇaḥ ॥

“A person is born as a *śūdra* and by undergoing the ritual of *upanayanam* he becomes *dvija*, twice-born. He becomes a *vipra* by

study of Vedas and becomes a Brahmin by knowing Brahman, the Supreme Reality”.

The ritual of *upanayanam* is done at the age of eight in the case of a Brahmin and a few years later in the case of *kṣatriya* and *vaiśya*. In this ritual the boy is told the Gayatri mantra and is also told about the process of meditating on it. The boy may not understand the meaning and significance at that stage but it is hoped that the study of Vedas will enable him to know the meaning gradually as he matures.

As a sign of his new status he gets a sacred thread to be worn across the body. This thread is called *yajñopavītam*. It is in fact three threads which are tied into a knot to form a loop and this loop is worn. The three threads are said to symbolize the three aspects in nature – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. According to yoga tradition they are said to symbolize three energy channels – *ida*, *pingala*, *suṣumna* – running through the vertebral column. *Suṣumna* is said to represent Brahman.

After *upanayanam*, the boy goes to a teacher and studies the Vedas. Hereafter is called a *brahma-cārī*, a person trying to know Brahman. He becomes eligible to perform *SV*. He has to continue this till his last breath in his old age.

It is heartening that the Indian parents of new generation are keen on inducting their children into this ritual. We see the young generation, particularly in the west, feeling lost and confused, facing existential questions about the meaning in life and getting tossed about from one guru to another. The *Vedic* practice of *upanayanam* gives the boy a rational understanding of Reality and guides him further.

1.7. What is the difference between *SV* and *devatārcanam*?

Both *SV* and *devatā-arcanam* are usually performed one after the other by devout Hindus. *SV* is of the nature of a philosophical meditation which is mandated by the scriptures. There is no prayer

for any personal gain or fulfilment of desire. The *devatā-arcanam*, as the name indicates, is a prayer to a personal god which may be Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Ganesha, Nrisimha or Krishna as the case may be. It may also be a combination of *mantra-s* or *stotram-s*¹ relating to these deities. This is not mandatory. All the *pūja-s* (worships) which are performed when we visit a temple are of the nature of prayers for wish fulfilment.

In order to understand the difference between *SV* and *devatā-arcanam*, we have to see the difference between religion and philosophy. Religion is based on a belief system, devoid of rational enquiry. Philosophy on the other hand, is a rational enquiry into the nature of reality. *Upanishads* belong to this category. They define the Supreme Reality not as a personal god but as infinitely existing consciousness (*Taittiriya Upanishad* 2-1). It is not a belief but a rationally derived finding. It goes beyond religious beliefs. In the Gayatri *mantra*, as we see below, the meditation is on that infinitely existing consciousness which is also the self and nature of the student himself. Hence *SV* is to be understood as a philosophical meditation.

1.8. In a Nutshell

In a nutshell, *SV* can be understood as the oldest guided meditation. We are all familiar with the guided meditations conducted by our modern *guru-s*. These meditations teach how to enquire into the nature of self and to be constantly in such awareness. *SV* is of the nature of a reminder to the practitioner three times a day that he is divine in nature and that all else in the universe is a similar manifestation.

1.9. A note on pronunciation of *mantra-s*

SV includes several Vedic *mantra-s* which have a specific intonation. Pronunciation/recitation of these *mantra-s* have to

¹ *mantra* is from the Vedas whereas *stotram* is a hymn composed in praise of a particular deity by writers such as Sri Shankara, Sri Ramanuja etc.,

be learnt from a teacher in person. Change in intonation is said to bring about change in the meaning of the *mantra* and hence we have to aim at the right pronunciation. The YouTube seems to be having some good links which can also be perused.

What is pronounced as *haṃsa* (हंस) in *Rig-Veda* and other Vedas, is pronounced as *hagaṅ sa* (हगंस) with an additional sound of 'ga' in the *Yajur-Veda mantra*-s. Such expressions are seen in several cases in *SV*. The student is requested to know the pronunciation from a teacher.

* * *

2

सन्ध्यावन्दनम्
sandhyāvandanam

Text

*1. श्लो॥ अपवित्रः पवित्रो वा सर्वावस्थां गतोऽपि वा ।
यः स्मरेत् पुण्डरीकाक्षं स बाह्याभ्यन्तरः शुचिः ॥

ślo|| *apavitraḥ pavitro vā sarvāvasthāṃ gato'pi vā |*
yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣaṃ sa bāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ ||
पुण्डरीकाक्ष! पुण्डरीकाक्ष! पुण्डरीकाक्ष!
puṇḍarikākṣa! puṇḍarikākṣa! puṇḍarikākṣa!

** 2. आचमनम् - *ācamanam*

ॐ केशवाय स्वाहा - *Om keśavāya svāhā*
ॐ नारायणाय स्वाहा - *Om nārāyaṇāya svāhā*
ॐ माधवाय स्वाहा - *Om mādhavāya svāhā*
ॐ गोविन्दाय नमः - *Om govindāya namaḥ*
ॐ विष्णवे नमः - *Om viṣṇave namaḥ*
ॐ मधुसूदनाय नमः - *Om madhusūdanāya namaḥ*
ॐ त्रिविक्रमाय नमः - *Om trivikramāya namaḥ*
ॐ वामनाय नमः - *Om vāmanāya namaḥ*
ॐ श्रीधराय नमः - *Om śrīdharāya namaḥ*
ॐ हृषीकेशाय नमः - *Om ṛṣīkeśāya namaḥ*

ॐ पद्मनाभाय नमः - *Om padmanābhāya namaḥ*

ॐ दामोदराय नमः - *Om dāmodarāya namaḥ*

ॐ सङ्कर्षणाय नमः - *Om saṅkarṣaṇāya namaḥ*

ॐ वासुदेवाय नमः - *Om vāsudevāya namaḥ*

ॐ प्रद्युम्नाय नमः - *Om pradyumnāya namaḥ*

ॐ अनिरुद्धाय नमः - *Om aniruddhāya namaḥ*

ॐ पुरुषोत्तमाय नमः - *Om puruṣottamāya namaḥ*

ॐ अधोक्षजाय नमः - *Om adhokṣajāya namaḥ*

ॐ नारसिंहाय नमः - *Om nārasimhāya namaḥ*

ॐ अच्युताय नमः - *Om acyutāya namaḥ*

ॐ जनार्दनाय नमः - *Om janārdanāya namaḥ*

ॐ उपेन्द्राय नमः - *Om upendrāya namaḥ*

ॐ हरये नमः - *Om haraye namaḥ*

ॐ श्रीकृष्णाय नमः - *Om śrīkṛṣṇāya namaḥ*

* 3. भूतोच्चाटनम् - *bhūtoccāṭanam*

श्लो॥ उत्तिष्ठन्तु भूतपिशाचाः ये ते भूमिभारकाः ।
एतेषामविरोधेन ब्रह्मकर्म समारभे ॥

ślo|| *uttiṣṭhantu bhūtapiśācāḥ ye te bhūmibhārakāḥ ।
eteṣāmavirodhena brahmakarma samārabhe ॥*

** 4. प्राणायामः - *prāṇāyāmaḥ*

मं॥ ॐ भूः, ॐ भुवः, ओगं सुवः, ॐ महः, ॐ जनः, ॐ तपः, ओगं
सत्यं, ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि, धियो यो नः
प्रचोदयात्, ओमापोज्योती रसोऽमृतं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवस्सुवरोम् ॥

maṃ|| *Om bhūḥ, Om bhuvah, ogaṅ swah, Om mahah, Om janah,
Om tapah, ogaṅ satyaṃ, Om tatsaviturvareṇyaṃ bhargo
devasya dhīmahī, dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt, omāpojyotī
raso'mṛtaṃ brahma bhūrbhuvassuvarom ॥*

* 5. सङ्कल्पः - *sankalpaḥ*

5.1. ममोपात्त-दुरित-क्षय-द्वारा श्री-परमेश्वरमुद्दिश्य श्री-परमेश्वर-
प्रीत्यर्थं शुभे शोभने मुहूर्ते श्री महाविष्णोराज्ञया प्रवर्तमानस्य अद्य ब्रह्मणः
द्वितीयपरार्धे श्वेतवराह-कल्पे वैवस्वत-मन्वन्तरे कलि-युगे प्रथम-पादे
जंबू-द्वीपे भरत-वर्षे भरत-खण्डे मेरोः दक्षिण-दिग्भागे ----- (कृष्णा-
गोदावर्योः मध्य)-देशे शोभनगृहे समस्त-देवता-ब्राह्मण-हरिहर-सन्निधौ

*mamopātta-durita-kṣaya-dvārā śrī-parameśvaramud-
diśya śrī-parameśvara-prītyarthaṃ śubhe śobhane muhūrte śrī
mahāviṣṇorājñayā pravartamānasya adya brahmaṇaḥ dvitīyap-
arārdhe śvetavarāha-kalpe vaivasvata-manvantare kali-yuge
prathama-pāde jambū-dvīpe bharata-varṣe bharata-khaṇḍe
meroḥ dakṣiṇa-digbhāge ----- (kṛṣṇā-godāvaryoḥ madhya)-deśe
śobhanagrhe samasta-devatā-brāhmaṇa-harihara-sannidhau*

5.2. अस्मिन् वर्तमान व्यावहारिक चान्द्रमानेन ----- संवत्सरे -----
अयने ----- ऋतौ ----- मासे ----- पक्षे ----- तिथौ शुभ नक्षत्र शुभयोग
शुभकरण एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायां शुभतिथौ ।

*asmin vartamāna vyāvahārika cāndramānena ----- sam-
vatsare ----- ayane ----- ṛtau ----- māse ----- pakṣe ----- tithau śub-
ha nakṣatra śubhayoga śubhakarāṇa evaṅguṇa viśeṣaṇa viśiṣṭāyāṃ
śubhatithau ।*

5.3. श्रीमान् ----- गोत्रः ----- अहं (प्रातस्सन्ध्याम्/माध्याह्निक
सन्ध्याम्/ सायंसन्ध्याम्) उपासिष्ये ।

*śrīmān ----- gotraḥ ----- ahaṃ (prātassandhyām/mādhyāh-
nika sandhyām/ sāyaṃsandhyām) upāsiṣye ।*

* 6. मार्जनम् (*mārjanam*)

मं॥ आपो हि ष्ठा मयोभुवः। - *āpo hi ṣṭhā mayobhuvaḥ*
ता न ऊर्जे दधातन। - *tā na ūrje dadhātana*
महे रणाय चक्षसे । - *mahe raṇāya cakṣase ।*
यो व शिशवतमो रसः। - *yo va śśivatamo rasaḥ*

तस्य भाजयतेह नः। - *tasya bhājayateha naḥ*
 उशतीरिव मातरः। - *uśatīriva mātaraḥ*।
 तस्मा अरं गमाम वः। - *tasmā aram gamāma vaḥ*।
 यस्य क्षयाय जिन्वथा। - *yasya kṣayāya jinvatha*।
 आपो जनयथा च नः॥ - *āpo janayathā ca naḥ*॥

* 7. मन्त्रजलप्राशनम् (*mantra-jala-prāśanam*)

7.1. प्रातः-सन्ध्यावन्दने - *prātaḥ-sandhyāvandane*

मं॥ सूर्यश्च मा मन्युश्च मन्यु-पतयश्च मन्यु-कृतेभ्यः।
 पापेभ्यो रक्षन्ताम्। यद्रात्रिया पापमकार्षम्।
 मनसा वाचा हस्ताभ्यां पद्भ्यामुदरेण शिश्रा
 रात्रिस्तदवलुंपतु। यत्किंच दुरितं मयि
 इदमहं माममृत-योनौ सूर्ये ज्योतिषि जुहोमि स्वाहा॥

maṃ॥ *sūryaśca mā manyuśca manyu-patayaśca manyu-kṛtebhyaḥ*।
pāpebhyo rakṣantām। *yadrātriyā pāpamakārṣam*।
manasā vācā hastābhyāṃ padbhyāmudareṇa śiśnā
rātristadavaluṃpatu। *yatkimca duritaṃ mayi*
idamaham māmamṛta-yonau sūrye jyotiṣi juhomi svāhā॥

7.2. माध्याह्निक-सन्ध्यावन्दने - *mādhyāhnikā-sandhyāvandane*

मं॥ आपः पुनन्तु पृथिवीं पृथिवी पूता पुनातु माम्।
 पुनन्तु ब्रह्मणस्पति ब्रह्म पूता पुनातु माम्।
 यदुच्छिष्ट मभोज्यं यद्वा दुश्चरितं मम।
 सर्वं पुनन्तु मामापोऽसतां च प्रतिग्रहग्ं स्वाहा॥

maṃ॥ *āpaḥ punantu pṛthivīm pṛthivī pūtā punātu mām*।
punantu brahmaṇaspati rbrahma pūtā punātu mām।
yaducchiṣṭa mabhojyaṃ yadvā duścaritaṃ mama।
sarvaṃ punantu māmāpo'satāṃ ca pratigrahagg svāhā।

7.3. सायं-सन्ध्यावन्दने - *sāyaṃ-sandhyāvandane*

मं॥ अग्निश्च मा मन्युश्च मन्यु-पतयश्च मन्यु-कृतेभ्यः ।
पापेभ्यो रक्षन्ताम् । यदहना पापमकार्षम् ।
मनसा वाचा हस्ताभ्यां । पद्भ्यामुदरेण शिश्रा ।
अह स्तदवलुंपतु । यत्किंच दुरितं मयि। इदमहं
माममृत-योनौ सत्ये ज्योतिषि जुहोमि स्वाहा ॥

*maṃ॥ agniśca mā manyuśca manyu-patayaśca manyu-kṛtebhyah ।
pāpebhyo rakṣantām । yadahānā pāpamakārṣam ।
manasā vācā hastābhyāṃ । padbhyāmudareṇa śiśnā ।
aha stadavaluṃpatu । yatkiṃca duritaṃ mayi । idamaham
māmamṛta-yonau satye jyotiṣi juhomi svāhā ॥*

* 8. मार्जनम् - *mārjanam*

8.1. मं॥ दधिक्राव्णो अकारिषम् । जिष्णोरश्वस्य वाजिनः ।
सुरभि नो मुखा करत् प्र ण आयूगशि तारिषत् ।

*maṃ॥ dadhikrāvṇo akāriṣam । jiṣṇoraśvasya vājinaḥ ।
surabhi no mukhā karat pra ṇa āyūgaḥṣi tāriṣat ।*

8.2. मं॥ आपो हि ष्ठा मयोभुवः। - *maṃ॥ āpo hi ṣṭhā mayobhuvaḥ।*
ता न ऊर्जे दधातना। - *tā na ūrje dadhātana।*
महे रणाय चक्षसे । - *mahe raṇāya cakṣase ।*
यो व शिशवतमो रसः। - *yo va śśivatamo rasaḥ।*
तस्य भाजयतेह नः। - *tasya bhājayateha naḥ।*
उशतीरिव मातरः । - *uśatīriva mātaraḥ ।*
तस्मा अरं गमाम वः । - *tasmā araṃ gamāma vaḥ ।*
यस्य क्षयाय जिन्वथ। - *yasya kṣayāya jinvaṭha।*
आपो जनयथा च नः ॥ - *āpo janayathā ca naḥ ॥*

8.3. मं॥ हिरण्यवर्णा श्शुचयः पावका
यासु जातः कश्यपो यास्विन्द्रः ।
अग्निं या गर्भं दधिरे विरूपा
स्ता न आपश्शगु स्योना भवन्तु ॥

maṃ॥ *hiranyavarṇā śśucayaḥ pāvakā
yāsu jātaḥ kaśyapo yāsvimdraḥ ।
agniṃ yā garbhaṃ dadhire virūpā
stā na āpaśśagg syonā bhavantu ॥*

8.5 मं॥ यासां राजा वरुणो याति
मध्ये सत्यानृते अवपश्य-ञ्जनानाम् ।
मधुश्चुत श्शुचयो-याः पावका
स्ता न आपश्शग् स्योना भवन्तु ॥

maṃ॥ *yāsāgamṣ rājā varuṇo yāti
madhye satyānṛte avapaśya-ñjanānām ।
madhuścuta śśucayo-yāḥ pāvakā
stā na āpaśśagg syonā bhavantu ॥*

8.5. मं॥ यासां देवा दिवि कृण्वन्ति
भक्षं या अन्तरिक्षे बहुधा भवन्ति ।
याः पृथिवीं पयसोन्दन्ति शुक्रास्ता
न आपश्शग् स्योना भवन्तु ॥

maṃ॥ *yāsām devā divi kṛṇvanti
bhakṣaṃ yā antarikṣe bahudhā bhavanti ।
yāḥ pṛthivīm payasondanti śukrāstā
na āpaśśagg syonā bhavantu ॥*

8.6. मं॥ शिवेन मा चक्षुषा पश्यताप शिशवया
तनुवोपस्पृशत त्वचं मे ।
सर्वागश् अग्नीगश् रप्सुषदो हुवे
वो मयि वर्चो बल-मोजो निधत्त ॥

maṃ॥ *śivena mā cakṣuṣā paśyatāpa śśivayā
tanuvopasprśata tvacaṃ me ।
sarvāgaś agnīgaś rapsuṣado huve
vo mayi varco bala-mojo nidhatta ॥*

* 9. अघमर्षणमन्त्रः – *agha-marṣaṇa-mantraḥ*

मं॥ द्रुपदादिव मुञ्चतु । *drupadādiva muñcatu* ।
द्रुपदादिवे न्मुमुचानः । *drupadādive nmumucānaḥ* ।
स्विन्नस्नात्वी मलादिव । *svinnasnātvi malādiva* ।
पूतं पवित्रेणे वाज्यं । *pūtaṃ pavitreṇe vājyaṃ* ।
आपश्शुन्धन्तु मैनसः ॥ *āpaśśundhantu mainasaḥ* ॥

** 10. अर्घ्यप्रदानम् - *arghyapradānam*

पूर्वोक्त-एवंगुण-विशेषण-विशिष्टायां शुभतिथौ प्रातः सन्ध्यार्घ्यप्रदानं
(माध्याह्निक सन्ध्यार्घ्यप्रदानं, सायं सन्ध्यार्घ्यप्रदानं) करिष्ये ।

*pūrvokta-evaṅguṇa-viśeṣaṇa-viśiṣṭāyāṃ śubhatithau prātaḥ
sandhyārghyapradānaṃ (mādhyāhnikā sandhyārghyapradānaṃ,
sāyaṃ sandhyārghyapradānaṃ) kariṣye* ।

10.1. प्रातः/स्सायं सन्ध्यार्घ्य-प्रदान मन्त्रः

prātaḥ/ssāyaṃ sandhyārghya-pradāna mantraḥ

मं॥ ॐ भूर्भुवस्सुवः । ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो
यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

*maṃ॥ Om bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ । Om tatsaviturvareṇyaṃ bhargo
devasya dhīmahi । dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt* ॥

10.2. माध्याह्निक सन्ध्यार्घ्य-प्रदान मन्त्रः

mādhyāhnikā sandhyārghya-pradāna mantraḥ

मं॥ हगश् स श्शुचिषद्वसुरन्तरिक्षसद्होतावेदिषदतिथिर्दुरोण सत् ।
नृषद्वरसदृतसद्व्योमसदब्जा गोजा ऋतजा अद्रिजा ऋतं बृहत् ॥

*maṃ॥ haḡaś sa śśuciṣad-vasurantarikṣasad-hotāvedīṣad-atithirduroṇa sat ।
nṛṣad-varasad-ṛtasad-vyomasad abjā gojā ṛtajā adrijā ṛtaṃ bṛhat* ॥

मं॥ ॐ भूर्भुवस्सुवः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

*maṃ॥ Om bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ । tatsaviturvareṇyaṃ bhargo
devasya dhīmahi । dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt* ॥

* 11. प्रदक्षिणम् - *pradakṣiṇam*

मं॥ उद्यन्तमस्तंयन्त-मादित्य-मभिध्यायन् कुर्वन्ब्राह्मणो विद्वान् त्सकलं भद्रमश्नुते
असावादित्यो ब्रह्मेति ब्रह्मैव सन् ब्रह्माप्येति य एवं वेद असावादित्यो ब्रह्म ।

*maṃ॥ udyantam-astamyantam-ādityam-abhidhyāyan kurvan-
brāhmaṇo vidvān tsakalaṃ bhadramaśnute
asāvādityo brahmeti brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti ya evaṃ
veda asāvādityo brahma ।*

* 12. सन्ध्याङ्ग-तर्पणम् - *sandhyāṅga-tarṇam*

आचम्य, प्राणानायम्य - *ācamya, prāṇānāyamya*

ममोपात्त-दुरित-क्षय-द्वारा श्रीपरमेश्वर-प्रीत्यर्थं प्रातः (माध्याह्निक/
सायं) सन्ध्याङ्ग-तर्पणं करिष्ये ।

*mamopātta-durita-kṣaya-dvārā śrīparameśvara-prītyarthaṃ
prātaḥ (mādhyāhnikā/sāyaṃ) sandhyāṅga-tarṇam karīṣye ।*

12.1. प्रातः - *prātaḥ*

सन्ध्यां तर्पयामि - *sandhyāṃ tarpayāmi*
गायत्रीं तर्पयामि - *gāyatrīṃ tarpayāmi*
ब्राह्मीं तर्पयामि - *brāhmīṃ tarpayāmi*
निमृजीं तर्पयामि - *nimrjīṃ tarpayāmi*

12.2. मध्याह्ने - *madhyāhne*

सन्ध्यां तर्पयामि - *sandhyāṃ tarpayāmi*
सावित्रीं तर्पयामि - *sāvitrīṃ tarpayāmi*
रौद्रीं तर्पयामि - *raudrīṃ tarpayāmi*
निमृजीं तर्पयामि - *nimrjīṃ tarpayāmi*

12.3. सायं - *sāyaṃ*

सन्ध्यां तर्पयामि - *sandhyāṃ tarpayāmi*
सरस्वतीं तर्पयामि - *sarasvatīṃ tarpayāmi*
वैष्णवीं तर्पयामि - *vaiṣṇavīṃ tarpayāmi*
निमृजीं तर्पयामि - *nimrjīṃ tarpayāmi*

** 13. गायत्र्यावाहनम् - *gāyātryāvāhanam*

आचम्य - *ācamya*

13.1. मं॥ ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म । अग्नि देवता ब्रह्म इत्यार्षम् ।
गायत्रं छंदं परमात्मं सरूपम् ।
सायुज्यं विनियोगम् ।

*maṃ॥ omityekākṣaram brahma | agni rdevatā brahma ityārṣam |
gāyātram chaṃdam paramātmaṃ sarūpam |
sāyujyaṃ viniyogam |*

13.2. मं॥ आयातु वरदा देवि अक्षरं ब्रह्म सम्मितम् ।
गायत्रीं छंदसां मातेदं ब्रह्म जुषस्व मे ॥

*maṃ॥ āyātu varadā devi akṣaram brahma sammitam |
gāyātrīṃ chaṃdasāṃ mātedaṃ brahma juṣasva me ॥*

13.3

यदाहनात्कुरुते पापं तदाहनात्प्रतिमुच्यते॥
यद्रात्रिया त्कुरुते-पापं तद्रात्रियात्प्रतिमुच्यते॥
सर्ववर्णे महादेवि संध्याविद्ये सरस्वति॥

*yadāhnātkurute pāpaṃ tadahnātpratimucyate॥
yadrātriyā tkurute-pāpaṃ tadrātriyātpratimucyate॥
sarvavarṇe mahādevi saṃdhyāvidye sarasvatī॥*

13.4. ओजोसि, सहोसि बलमसि, भ्राजोसि देवानां धाम नामासि,
विश्वमसि विश्वायुः सर्वमसि सर्वायुः अभिभूरोम्॥

*ojosi, sahosī balamasi, bhrajosi devānāṃ dhāma nāmāsi, viś-
vamasi viśvāyuh sarvamasi sarvāyuh abhibhūrom॥*

13.5.

गायत्रीम्-आवाहयामि - *gāyātrīm-āvāhayāmi*
सावित्रीम्-आवाहयामि - *sāvitrīm-āvāhayāmi*
सरस्वतीम्-आवाहयामि - *sarasvatīm-āvāhayāmi*

छंदर्षीम्-आवाहयामि - *chamdarṣīm-āvāhayāmi*
 श्रियमावाहयामि - *śriyamāvāhayāmi*
 बलम्-आवाहयामि - *balam-āvāhayāmi*
 गायत्र्या गायत्री छन्दो - *gāyatrīyā gāyatrī chando*
 विश्वामित्र ऋषिः - *viśvāmītra ṛṣiḥ*
 सविता देवता, अग्निर्मुखं - *savitā devatā, agnirmukhaṃ*
 ब्रह्माशिरः, विष्णुर्हृदयगण - *brahmāśiraḥ, viṣṇurhṛdayagaṇ*
 रुद्रशिखा, पृथिवी योनिः - *rudraśikhā, pṛthivī yoniḥ*

13.6.

प्राणापान-व्यानोदान-समाना-सप्राणा श्वेतवर्णा सांख्यायन
 सगोत्रा गायत्री चतुर्विंशत्यक्षरा त्रिपदा षट्कुक्षिः पंचशीर्षोपनयने
 विनियोगः॥

prāṇāpāna-vyānodāna-samānā-sapṛāṇā śvetavarṇā
sāṃkhyāyana sagotrā gāyatrī caturvīṅśatyaḥkṣarā tripadā
ṣaṭkukṣiḥ pañcaśīrṣopānāyane viniyogaḥ॥

13.7. मं॥ ॐ भूः। ॐ भुवः। ओगं सुवः। ॐ महः। ॐ जनः। ॐ तपः। ओगं
 सत्यम्। ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि। धियो यो नः
 प्रचोदयात्। ओ मापो ज्योती रसोऽमृतं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवस्सुवरोम् ॥

maṃ॥ Om bhūḥ। Om bhuvāḥ। ogaṃ suvaḥ। Om mahāḥ। Om
janaḥ। Om tapaḥ। ogaṃ satyam। Om tatsaviturvareṇyam
bhargo devasya dhīmahi। dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt। o māpo
jyotī raso'mṛtaṃ brahma bhūrbhuvassuvarom ॥

आचम्य, प्राणानायम्य । - *ācamya, prāṇānāyamya ।*

* 14. करन्यासः - *karanyāsaḥ*

ॐ तत्सवितुः - ब्रह्मात्मने अङ्गुष्ठाभ्यां नमः - *Om tatsavituh -*
brahmātmane aṅguṣṭhābhyāṃ namaḥ

वरेण्यम् - विष्ण्वात्मने तर्जनीभ्यां नमः - *vareṇyam - viṣṇvāt-*
mane tarjanībhyāṃ namaḥ

भर्गो देवस्य – रुद्रात्मने मध्यमाभ्यां नमः - *bhargo devasya – rudrātmane madhyamābhyāṃ namaḥ*

धीमहि – सत्यात्मने अनामिकाभ्यां नमः- *dhīmahi – satyātmane anāmikābhyāṃ namaḥ*

धियो यो नः – ज्ञानात्मने कनिष्ठिकाभ्यां नमः - *dhiyo yo naḥ – jñānātmane kaniṣṭhikābhyāṃ namaḥ*

प्रचोदयात् – सर्वात्मने करतलकरपृष्ठाभ्यां नमः - *pracodayāt – sarvātmane karatalakarapṛṣṭhābhyāṃ namaḥ*

* 15. अङ्गन्यासः - *aṅganyāsaḥ*

ॐ तत्सवितुः – ब्रह्मात्मने हृदयाय नमः - *Om tatsavituh – brahmātmane hrdayāya namaḥ*

वरेण्यम् – विष्णवात्मने शिरसे स्वाहा - *vareṇyam – viṣṇvātmane śirase svāhā*

भर्गो देवस्य – रुद्रात्मने शिखायै वषट् - *bhargo devasya – rudrātmane śikhāyai vaṣaṭ*

धीमहि – सत्यात्मने कवचाय हुम् - *dhīmahi – satyātmane kavacāya hum*

धियो यो नः – ज्ञानात्मने नेत्रत्रयाय वौषट् - *dhiyo yo naḥ – jñānātmane netratrayāya vauṣaṭ*

प्रचोदयात् – सर्वात्मने अस्त्राय फट् - *pracodayāt – sarvātmane astrāya phaṭ*

भूर्भुवस्सुवरोम् इति दिग्बन्धः - *bhūrbhuvassuvarom iti digbandhaḥ*

* 16. ध्यानम् - *dhyānam*

16.1. श्लो॥ मुक्ता-विद्रुम-हेम-नील-धवल-च्छायै मुखै-स्त्रीक्षणै
र्युक्ता-मिन्दु-निबद्ध-रत्न-मकुटां तत्त्वार्थ-वर्णात्मिकाम् ।
गायत्रीं वरदाभयाङ्कुश-कशा-शशुभ्रं कपालं गदां
शङ्खं चक्र-मथारविन्द-युगलं हस्तैर्वहन्तीं भजे ॥

ślo|| muktā-vidruma-hema-nīla-dhavalā-cchāyai rmukhai-striḥṣaṇai
ryuktā-mindu-nibaddha-ratna-makuṭāṃ tattvārtha-varṇātmikāṃ |
gāyatrīṃ varadābhayaṅkuṣa-kaśā-śśubhram kapālaṃ gadāṃ
śāṅkhaṃ cakra-mathāravinda-yugalaṃ hastairvahantiṃ bhaje ||

16.2. श्लो॥ यो देव स्सविताऽस्माकं धियो धर्मादिगोचराः ।
प्रेरयेत्तस्य य द्भर्ग स्तद्वरेण्य मुपास्महे ॥

ślo|| yo deva ssavitā'smākaṃ dhiyo dharmādigocarāḥ |
prerayettasya ya dbharga stadvareṇya muṣāsmāhe ||

16.3. मुद्राप्रदर्शनम् - *mudrāpradarśanam*

श्लो॥ सुमुखं संपुटं चैव विततं विस्तृतं तथा ।
द्विमुखं त्रिमुखं चैव चतुः पञ्चमुखं तथा ।
षण्मुखोऽधोमुखं चैव व्यापकाञ्जलिकं तथा ॥
शकटं यमपाशं च ग्रथितं सम्मुखोन्मुखम् ।
प्रलम्बं मुष्टिकं चैव मत्स्यः कूर्मो वराहकम् ।
सिंहाक्रान्तम् महाक्रान्तं मुद्गरं पल्लवं तथा ।
चतुर्विंशति मुद्रा वै गायत्र्यां सुप्रतिष्ठिताः ॥

ślo|| sumukhaṃ saṃpuṭaṃ caiva vitataṃ viśṭṛtaṃ tathā |
dvimukhaṃ trimukhaṃ caiva catuḥ pañcamukhaṃ tathā |
ṣaṇmukho'dhomukhaṃ caiva vyāpakāñjalikaṃ tathā ||
śakataṃ yamapāśaṃ ca grathitaṃ sammukhonmukham |
pralambaṃ muṣṭikaṃ caiva matsyaḥ kūrmo varāhakam |
siṃhākrāntam mahākrāntam mudgaraṃ pallavaṃ tathā |
caturviṃśati mudrā vai gāyatriyāṃ supraṭiṣṭhitāḥ ||

16.4. श्लो॥ गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरु विष्णु-गुरु-देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरु स्साक्षात्परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥

ślo|| gururbrahmā guru viṣṇu-rguru-rdevo maheśvaraḥ |
guru śśākṣātparaṃ brahma tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ ||

** 17. गायत्री जपः - *gāyatrī japah*

ॐ भूर्भुवस्सुवः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः
प्रचोदयात् ॥

Om bhūrbhuvassuwaḥ | tatsaviturvareṇyaṃ bhargo devasya
dhīmahi | dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ||

* 18. जपावसानम् - *jaṭpāvasānam*

आचम्य, प्राणानायम्य - *ācamya, prāṇānāyamya*

18.1 पूर्वोक्त एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायां शुभतिथौ ममोपात्त-
दुरित-क्षय-द्वारा श्रीपरमेश्वर प्रीत्यर्थं प्रातः (माध्याह्निक/
सायं) सन्ध्याङ्ग-गायत्री-महामन्त्र-जपावसानं करिष्ये ।
भूर्भुवस्सुवरोमिति दिग्विमोकः

*pūrvokta evaṅguṇa viśeṣaṇa viśiṣṭhāyāṃ śubhatithau
mamopātta-durita-kṣaya-dvārā śrīparameśvara prītyartham
prātaḥ (mādhyāhnikā/sāyam) sandhyāṅga-gāyatrī-
mahāmantra-jaṭpāvasānam kariṣye | bhūr-bhuvassuvaromiti
digvimokaḥ*

18.2. ध्यानम् - *dhyānam*

श्लो॥ मुक्ता-विद्रुम-हेम-नील-धवल-च्छायै मुखै-स्त्रीक्षणै
र्युक्ता-मिन्दु-निबद्ध-रत्न-मकुटां तत्त्वार्थ-वर्णात्मिकाम् ।
गायत्रीं वरदाभयाङ्कुश-कशा-शशुभ्रं कपालं गदां
शङ्खं चक्र-मथारविन्द-युगलं हस्तैर्वहन्तीं भजे ॥

ślo॥ *muktā-vidruma-hema-ñīla-dhavalā-cchāyai rmukhai-striḡkṣaṇai
ryuktā-mindu-nibaddha-ratna-makuṭāṃ tattvārtha-varṇātmikām |
gāyatrīṃ varadābhayaṅkuśa-kāśā-śśubhraṃ kapālaṃ gadāṃ
śaṅkhaṃ cakra-mathāravinda-yugalaṃ hastairvahantiṃ bhaje ||*

18.3 श्लो॥ यो देव स्सविताऽस्माकं धियो धर्मादिगोचराः ।
प्रेरयेत्तस्य यद्भूर्ग स्तद्वरेण्य मुपास्महे ॥

ślo॥ *yo deva ssavitā'smākaṃ dhiyo dharmādigocarāḥ |
prerayettasya yadbhūrḡ stadvareṇya mupāsmāhe ||*

18.4. मुद्राप्रदर्शनम् - *mudrāpradarśanam*

श्लो॥ सुरभिर्ज्ञान नेत्रं च योनिः कूर्मोऽथ पङ्कजम् ।
लिङ्गं निर्याणमुद्रा चेत्यष्टमुद्राः प्रकीर्तिताः ॥

ślo॥ *surabhirjñāna netraṃ ca yoniḥ kūrmo'tha paṅkajam ।*
liṅgam niryāṇamudrā cetyaṣṭamudrāḥ prakīrtitāḥ ॥

ॐ तत्सद्-ब्रह्मार्पणमस्तु - *Om tatsad-brahmārpaṇamastu*

** 19. सूर्योपस्थानम् – *sūryopasthānam* – Worshipping the Sun (at the end of meditation).

19.1 प्रातः सूर्योपस्थानम् - *prātaḥ sūryopasthānam* – Worshipping the Sun in the morning.

मं ॥ मित्रस्य चर्षणी धृत शश्रवो-देवस्य सानसिम्
सत्यं चित्रश्रव-स्तमम् । मित्रो जनान् यातयति प्रजानन्
मित्रो दाधार पृथिवी मुत द्याम्।
मित्रः कृष्टीरनिमिषाभिचष्टे सत्याय हव्यं घृतवद्विधेम
प्र स मित्र मर्तो अस्तु प्रयस्वान् यस्त आदित्यः शिक्षति व्रतेन ।
न हन्यते न जीयतेत्वोतो नैनमगंशहो अश्रोत्यन्तितो न दूरात् ॥

maṃ ॥ *mitrasya carṣaṇī dhrta śśravo-devasya sānasim*
satyaṃ citraśrava-stamam । mitro janān yātayati prajānan
mitro dādhāra pṛthivī muta dyām।
mitraḥ kṛṣṭīranimiṣābhicaṣṭe satyāya havyaṃ ghr̥tavadvīdhema
pra sa mitra marto astu prayasvān yasta ādityaḥ śikṣati vratena ।
na hanyate na jīyatetvoto nainamagaṃśho aśnotyantito na dūrāt ॥

19.2.a. मध्याह्निक सूर्योपस्थानम्

मं॥ आ सत्येन रजसा वर्तमानो निवेशयन्नमृतं मर्त्यं च ।
हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेनाऽदेवो याति भुवना विपश्यन् ।
उद्वयं तमसस्परि पश्यन्तो ज्योतिरुत्तरं । देवं देवत्रा
सूर्यमगन्म ज्योतिरुत्तमम् । उदुत्यं जातवेदसं देवं
वहन्ति केतवः । दृशे विश्वाय सूर्यम्। चित्रं देवाना मुदगादनीकं

चक्षुर्मित्रस्य वरुणस्याग्नेः । आऽप्राच्यावा पृथिवी
अन्तरिक्षगं सूर्यं आत्मा जगत स्तस्थुषश्च ।

maṃ॥ *ā satyena rajasā vartamāno niveśayannamṛtaṃ martyaṃ ca ।
hiraṇyayena savitā rathenā' devo yāti bhuvanā vipāśyan ।
udvayaṃ tamasaspari paśyanto jyotiruttaraṃ । devaṃ devatrā
sūryamaganma jyotiruttamam । udutyam jātavedasaṃ devaṃ
vahanti ketavaḥ । dr̥ṣe viśvāya sūryam । citraṃ devānā mudagādanikaṃ
cakṣurmitrasya varuṇasyāgneḥ । ā' prādyāvā pṛthivī
antarikṣagaṅ sūrya ātmā jagata stasthuṣaśca ।*

19.2.b.

मं॥ तच्चक्षुर्देवहितं पुरस्ताच्छुक्रमुच्चरत् ।
पश्येम शरदश्शतं जीवेम शरदश्शतं नन्दाम शरदश्शतं
मोदाम शरदश्शतं भवाम शरदश्शतगं शृण्वाम
शरदश्शतं प्रब्रवाम शरदश्शत-मजीता सस्याम शरदश्शतं
ज्योक्च सूर्यं दृशे । य उदगान्महतोऽर्णवा द्विभ्राजमान
स्सरिरस्य मध्यात्समा वृषभो लोहिताक्ष
स्सूर्यो विपश्चिन्मनसा पुनातु ।

maṃ॥ *taccakṣurdevahitaṃ purastācchukramuccarat ।
paśyema śaradaśśataṃ jīveṃ śaradaśśataṃ nandāma śaradaśśataṃ
modāma śaradaśśataṃ bhavāma śaradaśśatagaṅ śṛṇvāma
śaradaśśataṃ prabravāma śaradaśśata-majitā ssyāma śaradaśśataṃ
jyokca sūryaṃ dr̥ṣe । ya udagānmahato'rṇavā dvibhrājamāna
ssarirasya madhyātsamā vṛṣabho lohitākṣa
ssūryo vipāścinmanasā punātu ।*

19.3. सायं सूर्योपस्थानम् - sāyaṃ sūryopasthānam

मं॥ इमं मे वरुण शृधी हव मद्या च मृडय ।
त्वामवस्यु राचके ।
तत्त्वायामि ब्रह्मणा वंदमानस्तदाशास्ते यजमानो हविर्भिः ।
अहेडमानो वरुणेह बोध्युरुशगं स मा न आयुः प्रमोषीः
यच्चिद्धि ते विशो यथा प्रदेव वरुण व्रतम् ।

मिनीमसि द्यवि द्यवि । यत्किं चेदं
वरुण दैव्ये जनेऽभिद्रोहं मनुष्याश्चरामसि ।
अचिन्ती यत्तव धर्मा युयोपि म मा नस्तस्मादेनसो देव रीरिषः।
कितवासो यद्रिरिपुर्नदीवि यद्वाघा सत्यमुत यन्नविद्म ।
सर्वा ता विष्य शिथिरेव देवाऽथा ते स्याम वरुण प्रियासः ॥

*maṃ॥ imaṃ me varuṇa śṛdhihava madyā ca mṛḍaya ।tvāmavasyurācake ।
tattvāyāmi brahmanā vaṃdamānastadāsāste yajamāno havirbhiḥ
ahedaṃmāno varuṇeha bodhyuruśagaṛ sa mā na āyuhḥ pramoṣiḥ
yacciddhite viśo yathā pradeva varuṇa vratam ।
minūmasi dyavi dyavi । yatkiṃ cedaṃ
varuṇa daivye jane'bhidrohaṃ manuṣyāscarāmasi ।
acittī yattava dharmā yuyopi ma mā nastasmādenaso deva rīriṣaḥ।
kitavāso yadriripurnadīvi yadvāghā satyamuta yannavidma ।
sarvā tā viṣya śithireva devā'thā te syāma varuṇa priyāsaḥ ॥*

20. द्विङ्गनमस्कारः - *dvīṅṅnamaskāraḥ*

मं॥ ॐ नमः प्राच्यै दिशे याश्च देवता
एतस्यां प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*Om namaḥ prācyai diśe yāśca devatā
etasyāṃ prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

नमो दक्षिणायै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*namo dakṣiṇāyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyāṃ
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

नमः प्रतीच्यै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*namaḥ pratīcyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyāṃ
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

नम उदीच्यै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*nama udīcyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyām
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

नम ऊर्ध्वायै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*nama ūrdvāyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyām
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

नमोऽधरायै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*namo'dharāyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyām
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

नमोऽवान्तरायै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*namo'vāntarāyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyām
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

21. मुनि नमस्कारम् - *muni namaskāram*

नमो गङ्गा यमुनयोर्मध्ये ये वसन्ति ते मे प्रसन्नात्मानः चिरंजीवितं
वर्धयन्ति नमो गङ्गायमुनयो मुनिभ्यश्च नमो नमो गङ्गा यमुनयो
मुनिभ्यश्च नमः ।

*namo gaṅgā yamunayormadhye ye vasanti te me prasannāt-
mānaḥ ciraṃjīvitaṃ vardhayanti namo gaṅgāyamunayo rmu-
nibhyaśca namo namo gaṅgā yamunayo rmunibhyaśca namaḥ ।*

22. देवता नमस्कारम् - *devatā namaskāram*

संध्यै नमः । सावित्र्यै नमः । गायत्र्यै नमः ।

saṃdhyāyai namaḥ । sāvitryai namaḥ । gāyatryai namaḥ ।

सरस्वत्यै नमः । सर्वाभ्यो देवताभ्यो नमः । देवेभ्यो नमः ।

sarasvatyai namaḥ । sarvābhyo devatābhyo namaḥ । devebhyo namaḥ ।

ऋषिभ्यो नमः । मुनिभ्यो नमः । गुरुभ्यो नमः ।

r̥ṣibhyo namaḥ | munibhyo namaḥ | gurubhyo namaḥ |

पितृभ्यो नमः । कामोऽकार्षीन्नमो नमः । मन्युरकार्षीन्नमो नमः ।

pitrbhyo namaḥ | kāmō'kāṛṣīnnamo namaḥ | manyurakāṛṣīnnamo namaḥ |

23. ईश्वर ध्यानम् - *īśvara dhyānam* – Meditation on the cosmic being

23.1. पृथिव्यापस्तेजोवायुराकाशात् ॥ *prthivyāpastejovāyurākāśāt*

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय । *Om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya |*

श्लो॥ यागसदा सर्वभूतानि चराणि स्थावराणि च ।
सायं प्रातर्नमस्यन्ति सा मा सन्ध्याऽभिरक्षतु ॥

ślo|| yāgaṣadā sarvabhūtāni carāṇi sthāvarāṇi ca |
sāyaṃ prātarnamasyanti sāmā sandhyā'bhiraḥṣatu ||

23.2. शिव-केशव-अभेद-स्मरणम् - *śiva-keśava-abheda-smaraṇam*

श्लो॥ शिवाय विष्णुरूपाय शिवरूपाय विष्णवे ।
शिवस्य हृदयं विष्णुर्विष्णोश्च हृदयगं शिवः ॥

ślo|| śivāya viṣṇurūpāya śivarūpāya viṣṇave |
śivasya hrdayaṃ viṣṇu rviṣṇośca hrdayagaṅ śivaḥ ||

23.3.

श्लो॥ नमो ब्रह्मण्यदेवाय गोब्राह्मणहिताय च ।
जगद्धिताय कृष्णाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः॥

ślo|| namo brahmanyadevāya gobrahmaṇahitāya ca |
jagaddhitāya kṛṣṇāya govindāya namo namaḥ||

* 24. गायत्री-प्रस्थान-प्रार्थना - *gāyatrī-prasthāna-prārthanā*

मं॥ उत्तमे शिखरे जाते भूम्यां पर्वतमूर्धनि ।
ब्राह्मणेभ्योऽभ्यनुज्ञाता गच्छ देवि यथासुखम् ।
स्तुतो मया वरदा वेद-माता प्रचोदयन्ती पवने द्विजाता ।
आयुः पृथिव्यां द्रविणं ब्रह्म-वर्चसं
मह्यं दत्त्वा प्रजातुं ब्रह्मलोकम् ।

maṃ॥ *uttame śikhare jāte bhūmyāṃ parvatamūrdhani ।
brāhmaṇebhyo'bhyanujñātā gaccha devi yathāsukham ।
stuto mayā varadā veda-mātā pracodayanti pavane dvijātā ।
āyuhḥ pṛthivyāṃ draviṇaṃ brahma-varcasam
mahyaṃ datvā prajātuṃ brahmalokam ।*

25. नारायण नमस्कृतिः - *nārāyaṇa namaskṛtiḥ*

श्लो॥ नमोस्त्वनन्ताय सहस्र-मूर्तये
सहस्र-पादाक्षि-शिरोरु-बाहवे ।
सहस्र-नाम्ने पुरुषाय शाश्वते
सहस्र-कोटी-युग-धारिणे नमः ॥

ślo॥ *namostvanantāya sahasra-mūrtaye
sahasra-pādākṣi-śīroru-bāhave ।
sahasra-nāmne puruṣāya śāśvate
sahasra-koṭī-yuga-dhāriṇe namaḥ ॥*

26. वासुदेव प्रार्थना - *vāsudeva prārthanā*

26.1. श्लो॥ आकाशत् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् ।
सर्वदेव-नमस्कारः केशवं प्रति गच्छति ॥

ślo॥ *ākāśat patitaṃ toyaṃ yathā gacchati sāgaram ।
sarvadeva-namaskāraḥ keśavaṃ prati gacchati ॥*

26.2. श्लो॥ वासनाद्वासुदेवस्य वासितं ते जगत्त्रयम् ।
सर्वभूत-निवासोऽसि वासुदेव नमोऽस्तुते ॥

ślo॥ *vāsanādvāsudevasya vāsitaṃ te jagatrayam ।
sarvabhūta-nivāso'si vāsudeva namo'stute ॥*

* 27. प्रवरान्वित नमस्कारः - *pravarānvita namaskāraḥ*

27.1. चतुस्सागर-पर्यन्तं गो-ब्राह्मणेभ्यः शशुभं भवतु. आङ्गिरस-
आयास्य-गौतमस-त्र्यार्षेय प्रवरान्वित-गौतम-सगोत्रः आपस्तंब-सूत्रः
यजुश्शाखाध्यायी ----- शर्मा अहं भो अभिवादेय ॥

*catussāgara-paryantaṃ go-brāhmaṇebhyaḥ śsubhaṃ bhavatu.
āṅgīrasa-āyāsya-gautamasa-tryārṣeya pravārānvita-gautama-sago-
traḥ āpastamba-sūtraḥ yajuśśākhādhyāyī ----- śarmā ahaṃ bho
abhivādāye ॥*

आचम्य - *ācamya*

27.2. श्लो॥ कायेन वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा
बुद्ध्यत्माना वा प्रकृते स्वभावात् ।
करोमि यद्यत्सकलं परस्मै
नारायणायेति समर्पयामि ॥

ślo॥ *kāyena vācā manasēndriyai rvā
buddhyātmanā vā prakṛte ssvabhāvāt ।
karomi yadyatsakalaṃ parasmai
nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayāmi ॥*

सर्वं श्रीपरमेश्वरार्पणमस्तु
sarvaṃ śrīparamēśvarārpaṇamastu

यजुर्वेद सन्ध्यावन्दनं समाप्तम् ॥
yajurveda sandhyāvandanam samāptam ॥

सन्ध्यावन्दनम्
Sandhyā-vandanam
 Text and meaning

* 1. श्लो॥ अपवित्रः पवित्रो वा सर्वावस्थां गतोऽपि वा ।
 यः स्मरेत् पुण्डरीकाक्षं स बाह्याभ्यन्तरः शुचिः ॥
 पुण्डरीकाक्ष! पुण्डरीकाक्ष! पुण्डरीकाक्ष!

ślo|| *apavitraḥ pavitro vā sarvāvasthāṃ gato'pi vā ।*
yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣaṃ sa bāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ ॥
puṇḍarikākṣa! puṇḍarikākṣa! puṇḍarikākṣa!

Meaning:

apavitraḥ pavitraḥ vā – Whether a person is in a pure or impure frame of body and mind; *sarva-avasthāṃ gataḥ api vā* – in whatever condition he may be; *yaḥ smaret* – the person who recalls the name; *puṇḍarika-akṣaṃ* - of Pundarikaksha; *saḥ* - he; *bāhya-abhyantaraḥ śuciḥ* - becomes pure internally and externally.

The person who, whether in a pure or impure frame or in any type of situation, recalls the name Pundarikaksha, would become pure internally and externally.

[This is the opening verse of *SV*. Purity relates to both body and mind. Bodily purity is ensured by bathing and putting on clean clothes. Internal impurities are our negative feelings like anger, greed, hate etc. The above verse says that mere recollection of god's name would purify internally too. How does it happen?

Here the name *Pundarikaksha* has a special connotation. It is formed by combining two words *pundarika* and *aksha*. The word *pundarika* means a lotus, besides other meanings like tiger etc. *Upanishads* refer to the human mind as a lotus. The word *aksha* means a sense organ. Thus, *Pundarikaksha* means one who illumines or activates the minds of all beings, not only of human beings but also of all living beings. This refers to the Supreme Reality, called Brahman in the *Upanishads*, which is of the nature of infinite consciousness. Thus, recalling the name of Vishnu would mean realizing the presence of such Reality in him or in other words, realizing one's own divine nature.

While the etymological meaning of the word *Pundarikaksha* is philosophical, the established meaning of the word is Lord Vishnu. Thus, recalling the name of Vishnu would mean that the practitioner is seeking the divine presence while performing this meditation and thus he performs it with sincerity. Hence in the above verse the word is used with two levels of meaning and we can take any meaning we wish.]

** 2) आचमनम् - *ācamanam* – (Ceremonial sipping of water)

[*Achamanam* involves ceremonially taking spoonfuls of water with the left hand and pour them into one's own right palm and sipping them while reciting the names denoting the Supreme Being. Water is sipped while reciting the first three names mentioned below and thereafter one has to recite the remaining names while touching different parts of the body. This procedure has to be seen from a teacher and practiced. The specially prescribed utensils have to be used during the entire ritual of *SV*.

The orthodox texts have several prescriptions about the manner in which the right palm has to be brought into a cup form, what quantity of water has to be put in that and how it has to be sipped.

One would go to hell if the procedure is not followed, they say. We need not be afraid of such injunctions because the commentators on Vedas have themselves mentioned that such warnings have to be taken as mere exhortations either to commend a procedure or condemn it. All such injunctions are taken from several *purana*-s. Several verses relating to *SV* are from the *Devi Bhagavatam*.]

Text

ॐ केशवाय स्वाहा - *Om keśavāya svāhā*, ॐ नारायणाय स्वाहा - *Om nārāyaṇāya svāhā*, ॐ माधवाय स्वाहा - *Om mādhavāya svāhā*, ॐ गोविन्दाय नमः - *Om govindāya namaḥ*, ॐ विष्णवे नमः - *Om viṣṇave namaḥ*, ॐ मधुसूदनाय नमः - *Om madhusūdanāya namaḥ*, ॐ त्रिविक्रमाय नमः - *Om trivikramāya namaḥ*, ॐ वामनाय नमः - *Om vāmanāya namaḥ*, ॐ श्रीधराय नमः - *Om śrīdharāya namaḥ*, ॐ हृषीकेशाय नमः - *Om hṛṣīkeśāya namaḥ*, ॐ पद्मनाभाय नमः - *Om padmanābhāya namaḥ*, ॐ दामोदराय नमः - *Om dāmodarāya namaḥ*, ॐ सङ्कर्षणाय नमः - *Om saṅkarṣaṇāya namaḥ*, ॐ वासुदेवाय नमः - *Om vāsudevāya namaḥ*, ॐ प्रद्युम्नाय नमः - *Om pradyumnāya namaḥ*, ॐ अनिरुद्धाय नमः - *Om aniruddhāya namaḥ*, ॐ पुरुषोत्तमाय नमः - *Om puruṣottamāya namaḥ*, ॐ अधोक्षजाय नमः - *Om adhokṣajāya namaḥ*, ॐ नारसिंहाय नमः - *Om nārasimhāya namaḥ*, ॐ अच्युताय नमः - *Om acyutāya namaḥ*, ॐ जनार्दनाय नमः - *Om janārdanāya namaḥ*, ॐ उपेन्द्राय नमः - *Om upendrāya namaḥ*, ॐ हरये नमः - *Om haraye namaḥ*, ॐ श्रीकृष्णाय नमः - *Om śrīkṛṣṇāya namaḥ*

[The above are the twenty four names of Lord Vishnu which are uttered while doing the *ācamanam*. The etymological meanings of most of these names have been explained by Sri Shankaracharya and others in their commentaries on *Vishnu-sahasranama* and other texts. The meanings, as given by Sri Shankaracharya, are as follows:]

Meaning:

ॐ केशवाय स्वाहा - *Om keśavāya svāhā* (taking a spoonful of water with the left hand, pouring it into the right palm held in a cup shape and sipping it) – The Supreme Reality in which the cosmic trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra manifest and represent the functions of creation, sustenance and dissolution.

ॐ नारायणाय स्वाहा - *Om nārāyaṇāya svāhā* (sipping water as above) – He is the goal to be attained by all human beings. It also means the Supreme Reality which indwells the entire universe.

ॐ माधवाय स्वाहा - *Om mādhavāya svāhā* (sipping water as above) – Several meanings are given for this name. i) One who is realized by meditation and yoga, ii) The lord of Supreme knowledge, iii) One who has *māyā*, the material for the universe, under his control.

ॐ गोविन्दाय नमः - *Om govindāya namaḥ* (taking a spoonful of water with the left hand and leaving it into the plate by pouring it over the right palm) – i) One who is realized by the Vedas, ii) One who imparts knowledge to all beings, iii) One who controls the sense organs.

[From here, there is no need to sip water or pour water through the right palm. We are expected to touch various bodily parts, as prescribed, symbolizing purification of the body with the names of Vishnu. The details of body parts are not mentioned here as the text would become too elaborate and cumbersome to the student.]

ॐ विष्णवे नमः - *Om viṣṇave namaḥ* - I salute Vishnu – i) One who pervades the whole universe, ii) One who manifests as all, iii) One who does not have limitations of time, place and limitation of being a particular person.

ॐ मधुसूदनाय नमः - *Om madhusūdanāya namaḥ* - I salute Madhusudana – The slayer of the demon Madhu. One who destroys the demonic tendencies.

ॐ त्रिविक्रमाय नमः - *Om trivikramāya namaḥ* - He pervaded the three worlds (earth, intermediate space and heaven) by three steps during the avatar of Vamana.

ॐ वामनाय नमः - *Om vāmanāya namaḥ* - The most desirable goal for all. [The Supreme Brahman dwelling in the intellect of all beings is called *vāmana* in the *Kathopanishad*.]

ॐ श्रीधराय नमः - *Om śrīdharāya namaḥ* - He has Sri, also known as goddess Lakshmi, the mother of all beings, on his bosom.

ॐ हृषीकेशाय नमः - *Om hṛṣīkeśāya namaḥ* - The Lord of the sense organs. The Supreme Reality which illumines the sense organs and the mind of all beings.

ॐ पद्मनाभाय नमः - *Om padmanābhāya namaḥ* - i) The lotus, the cause of universe, originates in his navel, ii) He shines in the center of the intellect (symbolically called *padma*, lotus) of all beings (he is the cause of all our knowledge).

ॐ दामोदराय नमः - *Om dāmodarāya namaḥ* - i) One who is realized by people who have achieved austerities such as self-control, ii) One who was bound by a *dāma* (rope) by his mother Yasoda, iii) The word *dāma* means a world. Damodara is one who has all the worlds in him.

ॐ सङ्कर्षणाय नमः - *Om saṅkarṣaṇāya namaḥ* - He pulls all beings into himself at the time of resolution.

ॐ वासुदेवाय नमः - *Om vāsudevāya namaḥ* - i) He who exists in all beings and illumines (enables) their intellects, ii) All the worlds exist in him, iii) the son of Vasudeva during the avatar of Krishna.

ॐ प्रद्युम्नाय नमः - *Om pradyumnāya namaḥ* - He is of the nature of Supreme wealth (knowledge).

ॐ अनिरुद्धाय नमः - *Om aniruddhāya namaḥ* - One who is never restrained by anything, one who is beyond all bondages.

ॐ पुरुषोत्तमाय नमः - *Om puruṣottamāya namaḥ* - The highest among all the sentient beings, as he is the source of all such sentience.

ॐ अधोक्षजाय नमः - *Om adhokṣajāya namaḥ* - i) He who never deviates or declines from his nature, ii) The knowledge of Supreme Reality arises only when the mind and senses are turned inwards, that is, when a person examines the nature of his own body-mind-complex. Such knowledge is Adhokshaja.

ॐ नारसिंहाय नमः - *Om nārasīṅhāya namaḥ* - One who has the combination of human and lion forms.

ॐ अच्युताय नमः - *Om acyutāya namaḥ* - One who does not decline from his nature.

ॐ जनार्दनाय नमः - *Om janārdanāya namaḥ* - i) He punishes the evil persons, ii) He is approached by people for fulfilment of desires, iii) One who troubles people by invariably giving the fruit of all actions, good and bad.

ॐ उपेन्द्राय नमः - *Om upendrāya namaḥ* - i) One who is superior to Indra, ii) One who is the younger brother of Indra (during the Vamana avatara).

ॐ हरये नमः - *Om haraye namaḥ* - He who takes away the ignorance of people and enables them to cross over the cycle of birth and death.

ॐ श्रीकृष्णाय नमः - *Om śrīkṛṣṇāya namaḥ* - i) He whose nature is existence and bliss, ii) One who is dark in color.

* 3. भूतोच्चाटनम् - *bhūtoccāṭanam* - (Driving the evil spirits away)

[The word is formed by combining *bhūta* and *uccāṭanam*. The word *bhūta* means anything which exists. In this context it refers to

an *evil spirit*. The word *uccātanam* means *driving away*. Thus *bhūta-uccātanam* means driving the evil spirits away. The significance is explained below. One has to take a spoonful of water with the left hand and pour it into the right palm kept in a cup shape and hold it while reciting the following verse and pour it into the plate after reciting the verse below.]

Text

श्लो॥ उत्तिष्ठन्तु भूतपिशाचाः ये ते भूमिभारकाः ।
एतेषामविरोधेन ब्रह्मकर्म समारभे ॥

ślo॥ *uttiṣṭhantu bhūta-piśācāḥ ye te bhūmi-bhārakāḥ ।*
eteṣām-avirodhena brahma-karma sam-ārabhe ॥

Meaning:

bhūta-piśācāḥ - The flesh-eating spirits; *uttiṣṭhantu* – may they depart; *ye te bhūmi-bhārakāḥ* - those which are a burden for earth; *eteṣām-avirodhena* – by removing their obstacle; *brahma-karma sam-ārabhe* – I commence the Brahma-karma.

Let the flesh-eating spirits, those which are a burden on earth, rise away and leave, so that without hindrance from them I can perform the Brahma karma.

[The word *bhūta* is explained above. The word *piśāca* means a demon which eats raw flesh. These spirits are said to be *bhūmi-bhārakāḥ*, which literally means ‘a burden to earth’. Where are such demons sitting around the young boy doing this meditation? The established meaning of the word *bhūmi* is earth. At another level it also connotes the plane of mind of a person. Yoga texts describe seven such planes or levels called *yoga-bhūmikā-s*. The person sitting in meditation is in one such plane. The negative tendencies of anger, lust, hate, greed etc., are the demons which gnaw our mind and eat our flesh. When these are actively present in the mind one cannot meditate on god. These are the real flesh-eating demons

which are an obstacle for such meditation. Hence the above verse is a resolve to drive away all negative ideas from our minds, at least temporarily, during the conduct of the ritual. The present ritual *SV* is a spiritual exercise, as it is basically a meditation.

The verse also says that *SV* is Brahma-karma, which means that it is a meditation on Brahman, the Supreme Reality. Brahman is defined in the *Upanishads* as the infinitely existing consciousness. The student performing *SV* is practising to see Brahman in himself as well as in all the beings in the universe. Not only all beings but the whole universe is a manifestation in Brahman. Lord Krishna uses the expression *brahma-karma* in the *Gita* (4-24) in the same sense. The commentator Shankarananda has explained the word as – *sarvatra brahma-mātra-darśanaṃ yat tat brahma-karma*. It means that the student is practising to see the whole universe, including himself, as not different from Brahman. Performance of *SV* three times a day would mean divinising our vision and getting into worldly transactions. Such vision naturally purifies the behaviour of a person.]

** 4) प्राणायामः - *prāṇāyāmaḥ* - (The regulation of breath)

[*Prāṇāyāma* is an important step in the eight-fold yoga system of Patanjali. The word *prāṇa* means the air we breathe and *āyāma* is regulating it.

*savyāhṛtiṃ sapraṇavāṃ gāyatrīṃ śirasā saha ।
triḥ paṭhet āyapraṇaḥ prāṇāyāmassa ucyate ॥*

Recitation of Gayatri mantra along with the seven sacred utterances (described below) along with the symbol Om and what is known as the *śiras* (crown) *mantra*, synchronizing it with breathing is called as *prāṇāyāma* (*Amrita-nadopanishad*).

Most texts on yoga describe the fundamentals of this regulation. It involves three steps. The first step is to fill the lungs with air,

breathing in slowly. This is called the step of *pūrakam*, filling. The air so inhaled should not be released immediately but it has to be kept in the lungs for some time. This retention of breath is called *kumbhakam*, keeping the lungs in a pot-like state (*kumbha* means a pot). The final step is to release the air slowly. This step is called *recakam*, which means emptying. These three steps constitute one cycle of breath.

This is not a mere aerobic exercise for lungs. It is an important discovery of ancient Indians that conscious practices of the body do influence the unconscious mind. It is particularly noted that regulation of breath leads to regulation of mind. It was observed by the ancients that breathing takes place alternately between the right nostril and the left nostril and the change take place after every two hours. There are certain actions compatible while breathing to right nostril and some others compatible while breathing to the left one. Such observation has resulted in a text known as *Svara sastra*. This text also mentions the relationship between human emotions and breathing.

While doing *prāṇāyāma* it would be easy and natural to inhale through the nostril through which breathing happens to take place at that time. There is no rule that inhalation should always done through the left nose or otherwise.

An observation of our own mind shows that the mind drifts very rapidly from one issue to another, hardly dwelling on a subject for a few seconds. In accordance with the fluctuation of mind and its emotions, the breath span also keeps changing. It is common experience that an angry person may be inhaling quite rapidly while someone in a calm mood may be inhaling gently. The slow inhalation, retention and exhalation during the *prāṇāyāma* cycle slows down the rapidity of mind.

How is *prāṇāyāma* integrated with *SV*. Chanting of Gayatri mantra is an important step during *SV*. The mind however, keeps

drifting. In order to stop this drifting of mind, the Gayatri *mantra* is recited slowly in each step of *prāṇāyāma*. It means that we mentally recite the whole mantra while slowly inhaling, and recite it again during retention of air in the lungs. Similarly, it has to be mentally recited while slowly releasing breath. Thus the mantra gets repeated thrice in one cycle of breath.

Initially our attention will be more on synchronizing the breath and recitation of *mantra*. Slowly, as the synchronization stabilizes, the mind is in a position to dwell on the meaning of the *mantra* thus stopping it from wandering. The student is advised to go through any basic book on meditation. Swami Yatiswarananda's book "*Meditation and Spiritual Life*" (Advaita Ashrama Publication) would serve as an excellent guide for the parents to know about the yogic practices.

The Gayatri mantra was revealed by sage Viswamitra, the famous sage who was initially an emperor and later, when he had a fight with sage Vasishtha, he wanted to become a Brahmana by doing tapas. Valmiki's Ramayana describes the great tapas and the spiritual transformation in Viswamitra, whereby he conquers the instincts like anger, hate, lust, vanity, attachment etc, and becomes a Brahmin. The students may read the story of Viswamitra from the *Bala Kanda* of the *Ramayana*. It is a symbolic story telling how sensual passions are conquered.

There are several *mantra*-s in the Vedas which were revealed by Viswamitra. The present Gayatri *mantra* is praised as the greatest mantra in the entire Vedic literature, because it is not a prayer to any personal god for fulfilment of any desire but it is a philosophical reminder about one's own divine nature. The meaning may not be immediately understood by an eight year old child when the *upanayanam* is performed, but it will slowly sink into the mind as he matures.]

[The following Gayatri mantra has to be chanted at the time of *prāṇāyāma* -]

Text

मं॥ ॐ भूः, ॐ भुवः, ओगं सुवः, ॐ महः, ॐ जनः, ॐ तपः, ओगं सत्यं,
ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि, धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्,
ओमापोज्योती रसोऽमृतं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवस्सुवरोम् ॥

- i) *Om bhūḥ, Om bhuvah, ogaṅ suvaḥ, Om mahah,*
Om janaḥ, Om tapaḥ, ogaṅ satyaṃ,
- ii) *Om tatsaviturvarenyaṃ bhargo devasya dhīmahī,*
dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt,
- iii) *omāpojyotī raso’mṛtaṃ brahma bhūrbhuvassuvarom ॥*

[In the above *mantra* the portion marked as i) is recounting the seven *vyāhṛti*-s, sacred utterances, explaining that the entire universe is represented by the symbol Om. The portion marked as ii) is the actual Gayatri mantra as revealed in the Vedas. The portion marked as iii) is a reiteration that the whole universe is symbolized by Om. The meaning of Om is explained in detail in the Annexure-I.]

Meaning:

i) The seven *vyāhṛti*-s

Om bhūḥ – The earth is Brahman, which is represented by the symbol *Om*;

Om bhuvah – the intermediate space is Brahman, which is represented by the symbol *Om*;

Om suvaḥ – the heaven is Brahman, which is represented by the symbol *Om*;

Om mahah – the region called *mahas* is Brahman, represented by the symbol *Om*;

Om janah - the region called *janas* is Brahman, represented by the symbol *Om*;

Om tapah - the region called *tapo-loka* is Brahman, represented by the symbol *Om*;

Om satyam - the region called *satya-loka* is Brahman, represented by the symbol *Om*;

[For a comprehensive understanding of the above names, see the note on *Om* in the Annexure-I]

ii) *The Gayatri mantra*

Om tat – of that Brahman

devasya – of that shining (luminous, of the nature of intelligence)

savituh – which is the source (in which creation, sustenance and resolution appear)

varenyam - most desirable bliss

bhargah - that illumining consciousness which destroys ignorance

dhimahi – we meditate as our own self

yah - that which

nah dhiyah - our intellects

pracodayat – illumines,

Its meaning is as follows:

We meditate, as our own self, the splendour of the consciousness, the entity which is the most cherished bliss and source (the substratum of the universe) which illumines our minds by destroying ignorance.

iii) *The śiro mantra*

om āpah - all waters are Brahman, symbolized by *Om*

jyotiḥ - all splendour (fire) present in all beings is Brahman

rasaḥ - all food, with all variety of tastes, is Brahman

amṛtaṃ - the food for gods is also Brahman

brahma – the Vedas are Brahman
bhūh - the earth, *bhuvaḥ* - the intermediate space,
svaḥ - the heaven, are all Brahman,
om – all that we see is nothing but Brahman, symbolized by
Om.

[The symbol *Om* is said to represent the Supreme Brahman. Vedanta says that what all appears as the universe is a manifestation in that Brahman.]

[The meaning of Gayatri as per Sri Shankaracharya:]

tat – refers to Brahman. The *Gīta* (17-23) says that the symbols ‘*Om*’, ‘*tat*’ and ‘*sat*’ denote the Supreme Brahman which indwells all beings.

savitā - refers to the substratum for the whole universe which appears to have three phases of creation, sustenance and resolution.

vareṇyam – denotes the bliss which is most desired by all beings and which is the nature of Brahman.

bharga – denotes knowledge (*jñānam*) which destroys nescience which is the cause for deluded thinking, because of which the human being forgets his divine nature.

devasya – The Sanskrit root *div* is used in the sense of illumining. Hence *devasya* denotes the all-illumining consciousness which is Brahman.

dhīmahi – ‘We meditate on it’. The student meditates on the Supreme Consciousness, Brahman, as not different from his own self.

dhīyaḥ yaḥ naḥ pracodayāt - That Supreme Consciousness which is the witness and illuminer for all thought processes in the mind.

* 5. सङ्कल्पः - *sankalpaḥ* - (intention)

[The word *sankalpa* means a resolve about any work which a person takes up. It is somewhat like a mission statement as we call now. We observe this when we go to a temple to perform some worship. The priest mentions the *sankalpa* before he starts the worship. The purpose of the present meditation is told below.]

Text

5.1. ममोपात्त-दुरित-क्षय-द्वारा श्री-परमेश्वरमुद्दिश्य श्री-परमेश्वर-
प्रीत्यर्थं शुभे शोभने मुहूर्ते श्री महाविष्णोराज्ञया प्रवर्तमानस्य अद्य ब्रह्मणः
द्वितीयपरार्धे श्वेतवराह-कल्पे वैवस्वत-मन्वन्तरे कलि-युगे प्रथम-पादे
जंबू-द्वीपे भरत-वर्षे भरत-खण्डे मेरोः दक्षिण-दिग्भागे ----- कृष्णा-
गोदावर्योः मध्य-देशे शोभनगृहे समस्त-देवता-ब्राह्मण-हरिहर-सन्निधौ

mamopātta-durita-kṣaya-dvārā śrī-parameśvaram-uddiśya
śrī-parameśvara-prītyarthaṃ śubhe śobhane muhūrte śrī mahā-
viṣṇorājñayā pravartamānasya adya brahmaṇaḥ dvitīya-parārdhe
śveta-varāha-kalpe vaivasvata-manvantare kali-yuge prathama-
pāde jambū-dvīpe bharata-varṣe bharata-khaṇḍe meroḥ dakṣiṇa-
digbhāge ----- kṛṣṇā-godāvaryoḥ madhya-deśe śobhana-grhe
samasta-devatā-brāhmaṇa-harihara-sannidhau

Meaning:

mama-upātta - Accrued to me, *durita* - sins, *kṣaya-dvārā* -
by destroying (sins), *śrī-parameśvaram-uddiśya* - addressing the
Supreme being, *śrī-parameśvara-prītyarthaṃ* - in order to please
the Supreme being, *śubhe śobhane muhūrte* - in this auspicious
moment, *śrī mahā-viṣṇoḥ-ājñayā pravartamānasya* - flowing as
per the divine mandate, *adya* - today, *brahmaṇaḥ dvitīya-parārdhe*
- the latter half of creator's life, *śveta-varāha-kalpe* - in the cycle of
creation known as *Sveta-varaha kalpa*, *vaivasvata-manvantare* - in
the tenure of Vaivasva Manu, *kali-yuge* - in *kali yuga*, *prathama-*

pāde – the first quarter, *jambū-dvīpe* – in the *jambu-dvīpa*, *bharata-varṣe* – in Bharata region, *bharata-khaṇḍe* – in the Bharata province, *meroḥ dakṣiṇa-digbhāge* – south of Mount Meru,-----
-- *kṛṣṇā-godāvaryoḥ madhya-deśe* – in the land between the two rivers Krishna and Godavari, *śobhana-gr̥he* – in the auspicious house, *samasta-devatā-brāhmaṇa-harihara-sannidhau* – in the presence of all gods, holy persons, Hari (Vishnu) and Hara (Shiva).

I, in order to please the Supreme Being by eradicating the sinful deeds of previous births, am addressing the Supreme Lord, in this auspicious moment, which is flowing in the passage of time as per the mandate of the Supreme. I am doing this in this second half of creator's life, in this cycle of creation known as *Sveta-varaha kalpa*, presided by a Manu named Vaivasvata, in kali-yuga, on this *jambu-dvīpa*, in the Bharata region, in the Bharata province, south of mount Meru, in the land between the two rivers Krishna and Godavari, in the auspicious dwelling house in the presence of all deities, sages, Vishnu and Shiva.

[Here the student's intention is clear. It is not about asking for any material gain. His goal is to merely follow dharma, which is the divine order, the cosmic scheme of well being of the universe. By doing this he is as though pleasing the universal Lord. He is describing his physical location on the globe, saying that he is in the southern part of Bharata-khanda. (Here the student is advised to mention the actual place of his stay whether it is in some part of India or in any other part of the world). It may look as though we are giving coordinates of the place to God. God does not need our GPS coordinates. It is merely to remind ourselves of the infinitesimal nature of the human situation. In spite of it, the indwelling essence of human being is not different from that Supreme Reality just as a bubble in the ocean is not different from the ocean.]

Text

5.2. अस्मिन् वर्तमान व्यावहारिक चान्द्रमानेन ----- संवत्सरे -----
- अयने ----- ऋतौ ----- मासे ----- पक्षे ----- तिथौ शुभ नक्षत्रे शुभयोगे
शुभकरण एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायां शुभतिथौ ।

asmin vartamāna vyāvahārika cāndramānena ----- saṃ-
vatsare ----- ayane ----- ṛtau ----- māse ----- pakṣe ----- tithau śub-
ha nakṣatre śubhayoge śubhakarāṇa evaṃguṇa viśeṣaṇa viśiṣṭāyām
śubhatithau ।

Meaning:

asmin vartamāna – Currently running, *vyāvahārika* – as in
the current practice, *cāndra-mānena* – as per the lunar calculation
----- *saṃvatsare* – name of the year to be mentioned ----- *ayane*
(mention whether it is the first half of the year or the second half)
----- *ṛtau* – (the season to be mentioned)---- *māse* ----- (the name
of the month)- *pakṣe* ----(the fort-night)- *tithau* (the name of the
day) *śubha nakṣatre* – under an auspicious star, *śubha-yoge* – in
the auspicious yoga, *śubha-karāṇa* – in this auspicious karana,
evaṃguṇa viśeṣaṇa viśiṣṭāyām śubhatithau – on this auspicious day,
as described.

[Note that the student is recalling the almanac, right from
the time of creation and down to the present year and mentioning
the name of the year, month, fort-night and day. The idea is that
the student reminds himself about the eternal passage of time, the
different cycles of creation and resolution and the passage of years,
months and days. He is a small participant in that eternal passage
of time.]

Text

5.3. श्रीमान् ----- गोत्रः ----- अहं (प्रातस्सन्ध्याम्/माध्याह्निक
सन्ध्याम्/ सायं-सन्ध्याम्) उपासिष्ये ।

śrīmān ----- gotraḥ ----- ahaṃ (prātas-sandhyām/mādhyāh-
nika sandhyām/ sāyaṃ-sandhyām) upāsiṣye ।

Meaning:

I, belonging to the (mention name of the gotra), (personal name) shall meditate on the morning/afternoon/ evening *sandhya*.

The mention of gotra is to remind one self of the great sage lineage. This is explained in step 24 below.

* 6. मारजनम् – *mārjanam* – (cleansing)

[The following nine *mantra*-s are from the (*Taittiriya saṃhitā* 4-1-5-18). In these *mantra*-s the sages are addressing the waters, the all-supporting source of the universe, to fill them with all energy and enable them to attain knowledge and be kind to them like mothers. The waters referred to are not the physical water we drink but they refer to the indwelling *paramātman*, the Supreme Reality. Several *mantra*-s, throughout the Vedic literature, mention *āpaḥ*, the waters as the source of the universe and as synonymous with Brahman.

While chanting these *mantra*-s the student sprinkles a few drops of water on his head with each *mantra*. The process has to be observed from a teacher.]

Text

मं॥ आपो हि ष्ठा मयोभुवः। - *āpo hi ṣṭhā mayobhuvah*।
ता न ऊर्जे दधातन। - *tā na ūrje dadhātana*।
महे रणाय चक्षसे। - *mahe raṇāya cakṣase*।
यो व शिशवतमो रसः। - *yo va śśivatamo rasaḥ*।
तस्य भाजयतेह नः। - *tasya bhājayateha naḥ*।
उशतीरिव मातरः। - *uśatīriva mātaraḥ*।
तस्मा अरं गमाम वः। - *tasmā araṃ gamāma vaḥ*।
यस्य क्षयाय जिन्वथ। - *yasya kṣayāya jinvatha*।
आपो जनयथा च नः॥ - *āpo janayathā ca naḥ*॥

Meaning:

आपो हि ष्ठा मयोभुवः। - *maṃ ॥ āpo hi ṣṭhā mayobhuvaḥ* | Oh waters! You are indeed the cause for happiness (of all beings).

ता न ऊर्जे दधातन। - *tā na ūrje dadhātana* | May such waters fill us with energy.

महे रणाय चक्षसे। - *mahe raṇāya cakṣase* | For clear knowledge.

यो व शिशवतमो रसः। - *yo va śśivatamo rasaḥ* | The knowledge of Brahman which is your *rasa* or essence.

तस्य भाजयतेह नः। - *tasya bhājayateha naḥ* | May that be given to us.

उशतीरिव मातरः। - *uśatīriva mātaraḥ* | Help us like mothers giving milk to their children.

तस्मा अरं गमाम वः। - *tasmā araṃ gamāma vaḥ* | May we approach you.

यस्य क्षयाय जिन्वथा। - *yasya kṣayāya jinvaṭha* | For that desired *rasa*, the bliss of Brahman.

आपो जनयथा च नः ॥ - *āpo janayathā ca naḥ ॥* Purify our minds and enable them to know Brahman (The literal meaning is ‘enable us to have children’. The philosophical meaning is that the knowledge of the Supreme is the real birth or the real life).

[These meanings are adopted from the explanation given by SKP and VSS – Annexure-IV]

* 7. मन्त्रजलप्राशनम् – *mantra-jala-prāśanam* – sipping the water after chanting the *mantra* mentally

7.1. प्रातः-सन्ध्यावन्दने - *prātaḥ-sandhyāvandane* – (the following mantra has to be recited during the morning *SV*)

Text

मं॥ सूर्यश्च मा मन्युश्च मन्यु-पतयश्च मन्यु-कृतेभ्यः ।
पापेभ्यो रक्षन्ताम् । यद्रात्रिया पापमकार्षम् ।

मनसा वाचा हस्ताभ्यां पद्भ्यामुदरेण शिश्रा
 रात्रिस्तदवलुंपतु। यत्किंच दुरितं मयि
 इदमहं माममृत-योनौ सूर्ये ज्योतिषि जुहोमि स्वाहा ॥

maṃ ॥ *sūryaśca mā manyuśca manyu-patayaśca manyu-kr̥tebhyah |*
pāpebhyo rakṣantām | yadrātriyā pāpamakārṣam |
manasā vācā hastābhyāṃ padbhyāmudareṇa śiśnā
rātristadavaluṃpatu | yatkiṃca duritaṃ mayi
idamaham māmamṛta-yonau sūrye jyotiṣi juhomi svāhā ॥

Narayanopanishad (32-50)

Meaning:

sūryaśca - The Sun (the etymological meaning of Surya is one who illumines the minds, the Supreme Being manifesting as Surya); *manyuḥ ca* – and the god of anger; *manyu-patayaśca* – the causes of anger (desire, hate, anger, greed etc); *manyu-kr̥tebhyah pāpebhyo* – from the sinful activities done due to anger; *mā rakṣantām* – protect me. It is a prayer to the god of anger and the causes of anger requesting them not to arise in the mind. Sinful activities are all due to the arising of anger and its consequences. *yad-rātriyā* – That during the night; *pāpam-akārṣam* – the sin I did; *manasā vācā hastābhyāṃ* - by mind (evil thoughts), speech (harsh words, telling lies) or hands (violent actions); *padbhyāmudareṇa śiśnā* – by feet, by stomach or by the genital; *rātriḥ-tadavaluṃpatu* – let the night destroy it. *kiṃca* – Moreover; *yat duritaṃ mayi* – whatever sin remains; *idam-ahaṃ mām* – that sin and also myself; *amṛta-yonau* – in the eternal (that which is the cause for liberation); *sūrye jyotiṣi* – in the light of Surya (in the light of knowledge of Supreme); *juhomi* – I offer myself (I realize myself as not different from that eternal reality); *svāhā* – the word *svāhā* is an utterance used when water is sipped from the palm as part of *ācamanam* (described above).

May the Sun god (the indwelling Supreme Being) and the presiding deity of anger protect me from actions arising from anger. May the presiding deity of the night save me from whatever sinful actions were committed during the night – in my mind, by speech, by hands and feet, by stomach and genital organ. If any sinful deeds do remain, I offer myself into the Sun, who is the glorious manifestation of the immortal Brahman (The student sips water from the right palm at the end of the *mantra*).

[Sun is a manifestation of the Supreme Brahman and *SV* is a meditation on the Supreme Brahman through the medium of Sun. Offering oneself into Sun means offering oneself in the fire of knowledge of Brahman. It means that the student is recalling his nature as not different from the Supreme Reality. This recollection is like offering his individual ego into Brahman, which is comparable to an ocean of consciousness. By such offering (remaining in the awareness of Brahman) the sins whatever would be neutralized. Meaning adopted from Sayanacharya, SKP & VSS-Annexure-IV.

Anger is the result of a desire unfulfilled. The *Gita* says that desire gets transformed as anger. All sins are committed due to desire and anger. The *SV* is an exercise to be constantly mindful of desire and anger so as to avoid them. As all human actions are through the mind speech and the body (the three instruments of action, called *tri-karaṇa-s*) all the three are mentioned here, signifying their purification.

An important point to be noted here and in the later mantra-s is that the student is not committing a series of sins and asking for forgiveness. Scriptures talk of several sins which are committed by us unknowingly in our daily activities such as causing death of tiny living beings while cooking, grinding food items, cleaning the house, fetching food grains from the fields and so on. It is also said that such prayer is made by the person due to fear of having committed any sin unknowingly.]

7.2. माध्याह्निक-सन्ध्यावन्दने - *mādhyāhnika-sandhyāvandane* –
(the mantra to be recited during the afternoon SV)

Text

मं॥ आपः पुनन्तु पृथिवीं पृथिवी पूता पुनातु माम् ।
पुनन्तु ब्रह्मणस्पति ब्रह्म पूता पुनातु माम् ।
यदुच्छिष्ट मभोज्यं यद्वा दुश्चरितं मम ।
सर्वं पुनन्तु मामापोऽसतां च प्रतिग्रहग्ं स्वाहा ॥

maṃ॥ *āpaḥ punantu pṛthivīm pṛthivī pūtā punātu mām ।*
punantu brahmaṇaspati rbrahma pūtā punātu mām ।
yaducchiṣṭa mabhojyaṃ yadvā duścaritaṃ mama ।
sarvaṃ punantu māmāpo'satāṃ ca pratigrahagg svāhā ॥

Meaning:

āpaḥ - The waters purified by *mantra*-s; *punantu pṛthivīm* - (may those waters) purify the earth; *pṛthivī pūtā* - having been purified, the earth; *punātu mām* - may the earth purify me; *brahmaṇaḥ-patiḥ* - The Supreme Reality, the lord of the Vedas; *punantu* - may purify me (the verb is in plural, as per the Vedic style); *brahma-pūtā* - the waters purified by Brahma; *punātu mām* - may purify me. *yad-ucchiṣṭam* - If I had taken food that is left over; *abhojyaṃ* - or eaten (enjoyed) something prohibited; *yadvā* - or; *duścaritaṃ mama* - any reprehensible act done by me; *sarvaṃ punantu mām āpaḥ* - may the waters purify all those; *asatāṃ ca pratigraham* - and any acceptance from immoral persons; *svāhā* - (sipping of water as above).

The all-pervading Brahman is the indwelling spirit in the waters we use. May such waters purify the earth (the gross body) and also purify me (the subtle body). May the waters also purify the revered teacher and may that revered teacher enlighten me with the knowledge of Brahman. If any sin has been unknowingly committed by me - like accepting leftover food or any inadvertent

act done or if I have accepted food from any sinner – may that be removed by these holy waters. Thus, let me become eligible to attain the knowledge of Brahman by eradicating all sins and by purifying my mind (Meaning adopted from SKP & VSS-Annexure-IV)].

7.3. सायं-सन्ध्यावन्दने - *sāyaṃ-sandhyāvandane* – (the following *mantra* has to be recited during the evening *SV*). Here too, the term ‘waters’ should be understood as in step 6.

Text

मं॥ अग्निश्च मा मन्युश्च मन्यु-पतयश्च मन्यु-कृतेभ्यः ।
पापेभ्यो रक्षन्ताम् । यदहना पापमकार्षम् ।
मनसा वाचा हस्ताभ्यां । पद्भ्यामुदरेण शिश्रा ।
अह स्तदवलुंपतु । यत्किंच दुरितं मयि। इदमहं
माममृत-योनौ सत्ये ज्योतिषि जुहोमि स्वाहा ॥

maṃ॥ *agniśca mā manyuśca manyu-patayaśca manyu-kṛtebhyaḥ ।*
pāpebhyo rakṣantām । yadahnā pāpamakārṣam ।
manasā vācā hastābhyāṃ । padbhyāmudareṇa śiśnā ।
aha stadavaluṃpatu । yatkiṃca duritaṃ mayi । idamaham
māmamṛta-yonau satye jyotiṣi juhomi svāhā॥

Meaning:

agniḥ ca - The Agni (the etymological meaning of Agni is one who is all-pervading, the Supreme Being manifesting as Agni); *manyuḥ ca* – and the god of anger; *manyu-patayaśca* – the causes of anger (attachment, hate, anger etc); *manyu-kṛtebhyaḥ pāpebhyo* – from the sinful activities done due to anger; *mā rakṣantām* – protect me. It is a prayer to the god of anger and the causes of anger requesting them not to arise in the mind. Sinful activities are all due to the arising of anger and its consequences. *yad-ahnā* – That during the day; *pāpam-akārṣam* – the sin I did; *manasā vācā hastābhyāṃ* - by mind, speech or hands; *padbhyām-udareṇa śiśnā*

– by feet, by stomach or by the genital; *ahah-tad-avaluṃpatu* – let the day destroy it. *kiṃca* – Moreover; *yat duritaṃ mayi* – whatever sin remains; *idam-ahaṃ mām* – that sin and also myself; *amṛta-yonau* – in the eternal (that which is the cause for liberation); *satye jyotiṣi* – in the light of Satyam (the Supreme Reality which is beyond time; that which exists beyond past, present and future); *juhomi* – I offer myself (I realize myself as not different from that eternal reality); *svāhā* – the word *svāhā* is an utterance used when water is sipped from the palm as part of *ācamanam* (described above).

[The overall meaning is as follows:]

May the god of Fire (indicating Supreme Being) and the presiding deity of anger protect me from actions arising from anger. May the presiding deity of the night save me from whatever sinful actions were committed during the day – in my mind, by speech, by hands and feet, by stomach and genital organ. If any sinful deeds do remain, I offer myself in the fire of knowledge of Brahman, of which the Fire is the glorious manifestation. By such offering (remaining in the awareness of Brahman) the sins whatever would be neutralized (Meaning adopted from SKP & VSS).

* 8. मारजनम् – *mārjanam* - (cleansing)

[In this the practitioner sprinkles a few water drops on his head while chanting the *mantra*-s below.]

Text

8.1. मं॥ दधिक्राव्णो अकारिषम् । जिष्णोरश्वस्य वाजिनः ।
सुरभि नो मुखा करत् प्र ण आयूगश्षि तारिषत् ।

maṃ॥ *dadhikrāvṇo akāriṣam* । *jiṣṇoraśvasya vājinaḥ* ।
surabhi no mukhā karat pra ṇa āyūgaśṣi tāriṣat ।

(*Rig Veda 4-39*)(*Tai.Sam. 1-5-11*)

Meaning:

dadhikrāvṇṇo akāriṣam - I have sung the glory of the Supreme Atman (*dadhikrāvā* is the Supreme Atman because he sustains all universe and pervades); *jiṣṇoḥ* - the one who is ever victorious; *aśvasya vājinaḥ* - the all-pervading one; *surabhi naḥ mukhākarat* - may that Supreme Atman make our mouths (faces) fragrant (may purify our speech by giving us the knowledge of Atman); *pra ṇa āyūṃṣi tāriṣat* - may he enhance our life span (meaning as per SKP & VSS).

I praise the ever-victorious, all-pervading Fire god (symbolizing the Supreme Brahman) who is the giver of food for all living beings. May the fire god make our faces fragrant (purify our mind and speech) and also give us long life.

[Request for a healthy, long life is justifiable, as it is an important tool for the seeker who is aspiring for the knowledge of Brahman (VSS).]

Text

8.2. मं॥ आपो हि ष्ठा मयोभुवः- *āpo hi ṣṭhā mayobhuvaḥ*।
ता न ऊर्जे दधातन। - *tā na ūrje dadhātana*।
महे रणाय चक्षसे । - *mahe raṇāya cakṣase* ।
यो व शिशवतमो रसः। - *yo va śśivatamo rasaḥ*।
तस्य भाजयतेह नः। - *tasya bhājayateha naḥ*।
उशतीरिव मातरः । - *uśatīriva mātaraḥ* ।
तस्मा अरं गमाम वः । - *tasmā araṃ gamāma vaḥ* ।
यस्य क्षयाय जिन्वथ। - *yasya kṣayāya jinvatha*।
आपो जनयथा च नः ॥ - *āpo janayathā ca naḥ* ॥

Meanings are given above in step 6.

Text

8.3. मं॥ हिरण्यवर्णां श्शुचयः पावका
यासु जातः कश्यपो यास्विन्द्रः ।
अग्निं या गर्भं दधिरे विरूपा
स्ता न आपश्शग्ग् स्योना भवन्तु ॥

maṃ॥ *hiranyavarṇā śśucayaḥ pāvakā*
yāsu jātaḥ kaśyapo yāsvindraḥ ।
agniṃ yā garbhaṃ dadhire virūpā
stā na āpaśśagg syonā bhavantu ॥

Meaning:

hiranya-varṇāḥ - The golden colored; *śśucayaḥ* - pure; *pāvakāḥ* - purifying in nature; *yāsu* - in which; *jātaḥ* - born; *kaśyapaḥ* - the progenitor Kashyapa; *yāsu* - in which; *indraḥ* - Indra; *agniṃ yāḥ garbhaṃ dadhire* - those waters which held fire in their womb; *virūpāḥ* - appearing in different forms; *tāḥ āpaḥ* - those waters; *naḥ* - to us; *śśam syonāṃ bhavantu* - may them be auspicious.

May the golden colored waters, which are pure and purifying in nature, be auspicious to us. The waters are the source for Surya, Indra and also Agni.

[We may see that the waters referred to are not the ordinary waters but the waters referred to in the *mantra-pushpam*, in which waters symbolize the Supreme Brahman which is the source for all things.]

Text

8.4. मं॥ यासागंश राजा वरुणो याति
मध्ये सत्यानृते अवपश्य-ञ्जनानाम् ।
मधुश्च्युत श्शुचयो-याः पावका
स्ता न आपश्शग्ग् स्योना भवन्तु ॥

maṃ॥ *yāsāgamṛ rājā varuṇo yāti*
madhye satyānṛte avapaśya-ñjanānām ।
madhuścuta śśucayo-yāḥ pāvakā
stā na āpaśśagg syonā bhavantu ॥

Meaning:

yāsām rājā varuṇaḥ - Varuna who is the lord of those waters; *yāti madhye* – abiding in the cosmic waters; *satya-anṛte avapaśyan* – watching the righteous and unrighteous actions; *janānām* – of the people; *madhu-ścutaḥ śucayaḥ* - the pure waters which are yielding honey; *yāḥ pāvakāḥ* - those which purify us from our sins; *tāḥ* - those waters; *naḥ āpaḥ śam syonāḥ bhavantu* – may them be auspicious to us.

The god Varuna moves in these waters, watching the good and evil activities of all beings. These waters release *madhu*, sweetness to the world and purify all beings. May such waters give us happiness.

[SKP says that Varuna here refers to Lord Yama, who watches the good and evil actions of people and gives result accordingly.]

Text

8.5. मं॥ यासां देवा दिवि कृण्वन्ति
 भक्षं या अन्तरिक्षे बहुधा भवन्ति ।
 याः पृथिवीं पयसोन्दन्ति शुक्रास्ता
 न आपश्शग् स्योना भवन्तु ॥

maṃ॥ *yāsām devā divi kṛṇvanti*
bhakṣam yā antarikṣe bahudhā bhavanti ।
yāḥ pṛthivīm payasondanti śukrāstā
na āpaśśagg syonā bhavantu ॥

Meaning:

yāsām - The waters which; *devāḥ divi* - the gods in heaven; *kṛṇvanti bhakṣam* - drink; *yāḥ* - those; *antarikṣe bahudhā bhavanti*

– exist in the intermediate space in several forms; *yāḥ* - those; *pṛthivīm payasā undanti* – soak the earth with waters; *śukrāḥ tāḥ* - those pure waters; *naḥ āpaḥ śaṃ syonāḥ bhavantu* – may them be auspicious to us.

The all-pervading waters are the food for the gods and the food for the humans when released in the form of rain. May such pure waters bring us happiness.

Text

8.6. मं॥ शिवेन मा चक्षुषा पश्यताप शिशवया
तनुवोपस्पृशत त्वचं मे ।
सर्वाग् अग्नीग् रप्सुषदो हुवे
वो मयि वर्चो बल-मोजो निधत्त ॥

maṃ॥ śivena mā cakṣuṣā paśyatāpa śśivayā
tanuvopasprśata tvacaṃ me ।
sarvāga^९ agnīga^९ rapsuṣado huve
vo mayi varco bala-mojo nidhatta ॥

Meaning:

āpaḥ - Oh waters! *mā paśyata* – Look at me; *śivena cakṣuṣā* – with a benevolent eye; *śivayā tanuvā* - with auspicious touch; *upasprśata tvacaṃ me* – touch my body; *sarvān agnīn huve* – I invite all the fire; *vaḥ apsuṣadaḥ* - which dwells in you; *nidhatta* - bestow; *mayi varcaḥ balaṃ ojaḥ* - spiritual splendour, strength and enthusiasm in me.

Oh waters! Bestow your auspicious glances on us. Touch me with your gentle body. I invite the fire in you in order to infuse splendour, strength and energy in me.

* 9. अघमर्षणमन्त्रः – *agha-marṣaṇa-mantraḥ* - A mantra to ward off sins. [*agha* is sin and *marṣaṇam* is its removal]

Text

मं॥ द्रुपदादिव मुञ्चतु । *drupadādiva muñcatu* ।
द्रुपदादिवे न्मुमुचानः । *drupadādive nmumucānaḥ* ।
स्विन्नस्रात्वी मलादिव । *svinnasnātvī malādiva* ।
पूतं पवित्रेणे वाज्यं । *pūtaṃ pavitreṇe vājyaṃ* ।
आपशशुन्धन्तु मैनसः ॥ *āpaśśundhantu mainasaḥ* ॥

Meaning:

drupadād iva muñcatu – Release me from sins like a person is released from a pillory;

drupadād iva inmumucānaḥ - like a person freed from a pillory;

svinnaḥ snātvī malād iva – like a person who has bathed;

pavitreṇa pūtaṃ vājyaṃ iva – and like ghee purified by the sacred grass;

āpaḥ - waters; *mā enasaḥ śundhantu* – purify me from sins.

May the Supreme Being, the witness for all activities, release me from all sinful activities like releasing a person from the pillory. May the waters purify me and purge me of all the sins. May I be purified like a person freed from pillory or like a person who has got rid of sweat by taking bath or like ghee which gets purified by the sacred *darbha* grass.

[The *mantra* refers to *drupada* which means a pillory, a wooden device into which the prisoner's legs are placed and bound. All good or bad *karma* binds the human being in the sense that it gives a result, which is of the nature of a re-birth. Here the seeker is asking for release from such bondage.]

**10. अर्घ्य-प्रदानम् - *arghya-pradānam* - (offering water ceremonially)

[The word *arghyam* means a respectful offering of a valuable thing. Here the offering is merely a palmful of water with each chant of the Gayatri mantra noted below. Water has to be thrown up into the air towards the Sun after each chant. (As it may not be possible in the modern environment, the water can be left into a plate). These waters are said to reach out to Sun and destroy the demons Mandehas who wish to grab the Sun (See 1.4 above). Such stories are to be understood as mere exhortations and we have to take the spirit behind them. The spirit in the present story is that the student has to observe the time of *SV* meticulously.

In case of delay in performing *SV*, the student has to offer one extra *arghyam* as an act of penance.

SKP says that this step is one of the three most important steps in *SV*, the other two being Gayatri meditation in step 17 and the final worship of Sun in step 19.]

Text

पूर्वोक्त-एवंगुण-विशेषण-विशिष्टायां शुभतिथौ प्रातः
सन्ध्यार्घ्यप्रदानं (माध्याह्निक सन्ध्यार्घ्यप्रदानं, सायं सन्ध्यार्घ्यप्रदानं)
करिष्ये ।

pūrvokta-evaṅ-guṇa-viśeṣaṇa-viśiṣṭāyāṃ śubha-tithau
prātaḥ sandhyā-rghya-pradānaṃ (mādhyāhnikā sandhyā-rghya-
pradānaṃ, sāyaṃ sandhyā-rghya-pradānaṃ) kariṣye ।

Meaning:

At this auspicious time, mentioned above, I do the respectful offering in the context of the morning/afternoon/evening *sandhyā*.

10.1. प्रातः/सायं सन्ध्यार्घ्य प्रदान मन्त्रः

prātaḥ/sāyaṃ sandhyārghya pradāna mantraḥ - (the *mantra* to be recited in the morning and in the evening *SV*.)

Text

मं॥ ॐ भूर्भुवस्सुवः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो
यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

maṃ॥ *Om bhūrbhuvassuwaḥ | tatsaviturvarenyam bhargo
devasya dhīmahi | dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ||*

(It is the same Gayatri *mantra* explained above)

10.2. माध्याह्निक सन्ध्यार्घ्य प्रदान मन्त्रः

mādhyaḥnika sandhyārghya pradāna mantraḥ - the *mantra* to
be recited in the afternoon.

Text

मं॥ हग॑ स श्शुचिषद्वसुरन्तरिक्षसद्होतावेदिषदतिथिर्दुरोण सत् ।
नृषद्वरसदृतसद्योमसदब्जा गोजा ऋतजा अद्रिजा ऋतं बृहत् ॥

*hagaḥ sa śśuciṣad-vasu-rantarikṣasad-hotāvedīṣad-atithir-duroṇa sat |
nṛṣad-varasad-ṛtasad-vyomasad abjā gojā ṛtajā adrijā ṛtaṃ bṛhat ||*

Meaning:

haṃsaḥ - That which pervades; *śuciṣad* - that which manifests
as Sun in the sky; *vasuḥ* - that which is the source of all; *antarikṣa-
sad* - that which manifests as air; *hotā* - the fire; *vedī-ṣad* - existing
on earth; *atithiḥ* - soma (the juice of soma creeper); *duroṇa sat*
- which exists in the sacred vessel; *nṛṣad* - that which exists in
humans; *vara-sad* - that which exists in gods; *ṛta-sad* - that which
exists as *yajña*; *vyoma-sad* - existing in space; *abjā* - existing in
water; *gojā* - existing in the form of crops on earth; *ṛtajā* - existing
as an auxiliary in *yajña*; *adrijā* - flowing out from the mountains
(in the form of waters); *ṛtaṃ bṛhat* - the reality which is the cause
for everything (this explanation is according to Sri Shankaracharya
in his commentary on the *Kathopanishad*).

The Brahman is all-pervading. It shines in the form of Sun in
the sky, as wind and fire in the intermediate space. It also shines

in the fire altar. It is the *soma* in the soma vessel. It pervades the humans, the deities, all living beings, as the food of all beings, in the sacrifices, in the waters of all rivers and as the reality in all.

[This mantra is from the *Taittiriya samhita* (1-8-15-30). It also appears in the *Kathopanishad* (2-2-2). It tells about the all-pervading nature of Brahman.]

मं॥ ॐ भूर्भुवस्सुवः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

maṃ॥ *Om bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ | tat-savitur-vareṇyaṃ bhargo devasya dhīmahi | dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ||*

* 11. प्रदक्षिणम् - *pradakṣiṇam* – Circumambulation

[Usually, in temples etc., circumambulation is to go round a deity, keeping the deity to the person's right side. The word *dakṣiṇa* means 'right side'. In the present step it is merely taking a right round about turn while standing in the same place.]

Text

मं॥ उद्यन्तमस्तंयन्त-मादित्य-मभिध्यायन् कुर्वन्ब्राह्मणो विद्वान् त्सकलं भद्रमश्नुते असावादित्यो ब्रह्मेति ब्रह्मैव सन् ब्रह्माप्येति य एवं वेद असावादित्यो ब्रह्म ।

maṃ॥ *udyantam-astamyantam-ādityam-abhidhyāyan kurvan-brāhmaṇo vidvān tsakalaṃ bhadra-maśnute asāvādityo brahmeti brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti ya evaṃ veda asāvādityo brahma |*

Meaning:

udyantam – Rising; *astamyantam* – setting; *ādityam* – Sun; *abhidhyāyan kurvan* – by meditating; *brāhmaṇo vidvān* – a wise seeker; *sakalaṃ bhadra-maśnute* – attains auspiciousness; *asāvādityo brahmeti* – meditating on Aditya as Brahman; *brahmaiva san* – by himself being Brahman; *brahma-apyeti* – attains (realizes) Brahman; *ya evaṃ veda* – one who knows; *asau ādityo brahma*

– that this Aditya is not different from Brahman (meaning as per Sayanacharya).

A wise seeker meditating on the morning Sun and on the evening Sun, contemplating that the Sun is Brahman would attain all auspiciousness. Such seeker, himself being Brahman all the while, would realize his nature as Brahman.

[This is a very important mantra as explained in step 1.3. It is from the Tai. Ar. 2-2. This is an explicit reminder to the student that he is essentially divine in nature and that every other being too is divine. Such idea generates love and respect for all beings, not only for human, but for all living beings.]

* 12. सन्ध्याङ्ग-तर्पणम् - *sandhyāṅga-tarṇaṃ* – *tarṇaṃ* as part of SV.

[*Tarṇaṃ* (literally means ‘making the deity happy’) involves offering water as in the case of *arghyam*, described in step 10 above.]

Text

आचम्य, प्राणानायम्य - *ācamya, prāṇānāyamyā* – having performed *ācamanam* and done *prāṇāyāma*

ममोपात्त-दुरित-क्षय-द्वारा श्रीपरमेश्वर-प्रीत्यर्थं प्रातः (माध्याह्निक/सायं) सन्ध्याङ्ग-तर्पणं करिष्ये ।

mamopātta-durita-kṣaya-dvārā śrīparamēśvara-prītyartham prātaḥ (mādhyāhnikā/sāyam) sandhyāṅga-tarṇaṃ kariṣye ।

Meaning:

mama-upātta - Accrued to me, *durita* - sins, *kṣaya-dvārā* – by destroying (sins), *śrī-paramēśvara-prītyartham* - in order to please the Supreme being, *prātaḥ* - morning; *mādhyāhnikā* – afternoon; *sāyam* - evening; *sandhyāṅga-tarṇaṃ kariṣye* – I shall perform the propitiation of the *sandhyā*.

12.1. प्रातः - *prātaḥ* - In the morning

Text and Meaning:

सन्ध्यां तर्पयामि - *sandhyāṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate sandhya (by offering water);
गायत्रीं तर्पयामि - *gāyatrīṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Gayatri
ब्राह्मीं तर्पयामि - *brāhmīṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Brahmi
निमृजीं तर्पयामि - *nimrjīṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Nimriji

12.2. मध्याह्ने - *madhyāhne* - In the afternoon

सन्ध्यां तर्पयामि - *sandhyāṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Sandhya
सावित्रीं तर्पयामि - *sāvitṛīṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Savitri
रौद्रीं तर्पयामि - *raudrīṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Raudri
निमृजीं तर्पयामि - *nimrjīṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Nimriji

12.3. सायं - *sāyam*- In the evening

सन्ध्यां तर्पयामि - *sandhyāṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Sandhya
सरस्वतीं तर्पयामि - *sarasvatīṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Saraswati
वैष्णवीं तर्पयामि - *vaiṣṇavīṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Vaishnavi
निमृजीं तर्पयामि - *nimrjīṃ tarpayāmi* – I propitiate Nimriji

** 13. गायत्र्यावाहनम् - *gāyātryāvāhanam* – Inviting Gayatri

[This is an invocation to Gayatri. What all has been told above is a preparatory stage for this meditation.]

आचम्य - *ācamya* – ceremonial sipping of water as noted above.

Text

13.1.

मं॥ ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म । अग्निर्देवता ब्रह्म इत्यार्षम् ।
गायत्रं छन्दं परमात्मं सरूपम् । सायुज्यं विनियोगम् ।

maṃ॥ *om-ityekākṣaraṃ brahma* | *agnir-devatā brahma ityārṣam* |
gāyatraṃ chandaṃ paramātmaṃ sarūpam | *sāyujyaṃ viniyogam* |

Meaning:

om-iti-ekākṣaraṃ brahma – The one symbol Om is Brahman. *agniḥ-devatā* – the presiding deity of the *mantra* is Agni; *brahma ityārṣam* – the sage is Brahman itself; *gāyatraṃ chandaṃ* - the prosody is Gayatri; *paramātmaṃ sarūpam* – its form is the Supreme Atman; *sāyujyaṃ viniyogam* – the aim is to attain oneness with the Supreme.

The symbol Om denotes Brahman. The presiding deity is Agni (denotes Brahman in this context) and the sage is Brahman itself. The prosody is Gayatri, and its form is Supreme Atman. The purpose is to attain oneness with the Supreme.

[*sāyujyam* is from the root *yuj* which means ‘to unite’, as in the word *yoga*].

Text

13.2.

मं॥ आयातु वरदा देवी अक्षरं ब्रह्म सम्मितम् ।
गायत्रीं छन्दसां मातेदं ब्रह्म जुषस्व मे ॥

maṃ॥ āyātu varadā devī akṣaraṃ brahma sammitam ।
gāyatrīṃ chandasāṃ mātēdaṃ brahma juṣasva me ॥

Meaning:

āyātu – May (the deity) come; *varadā devī* – the goddess bestowing boons; *akṣaraṃ* - the imperishable; *brahma sammitam* – whose eminence has been established in the Vedas; *gāyatrīṃ* - goddess Gayatri; *chandasāṃ mātā* – the mother of all metres (*chandas*); *idaṃ* - this; *brahma* – the hymn which is the result of my *tapas*; *juṣasva* - bless; *me* – mine.

May the goddess Gayatri, the giver of all boons, come to me. Gayatri, as demonstrated in Vedanta, is the imperishable Brahman itself. She is the mother of all Vedic utterances. May she enlighten me with the knowledge of Brahman mentioned in the Vedas (Saayanacharya).

Text

- 13.3. यदाह्नात्कुरुते पापं तदाह्नात्प्रतिमुच्यते॥
यद्रात्रियात् कुरुते-पापं तद्रात्रियात्प्रतिमुच्यते॥
सर्ववर्णे महादेवि सन्ध्याविद्ये सरस्वति॥

yadāhnātkurute pāpaṃ tadahnātpratimucyate॥
yadrātriyāt kurute-pāpaṃ tad rātriyāt pratimucyate॥
sarva-varṇe mahā-devi sandhyā-vidye sarasvati॥

Meaning:

yad ahnāt kurute – That which is done during the day; *pāpaṃ* - sinful act; *tad ahnāt pratimucyate* – may that be nullified during the day; *yad rātriyāt kurute-pāpaṃ* - the sinful deed committed in the night; *tad rātriyāt pratimucyate* – may it be nullified during the night; *sarva-varṇe* – (oh goddess!) whose manifestation is all the *varṇa*-s (the letters in the alphabet); *mahā-devi* – oh great goddess; *sandhyā-vidye* – who is knowable by the *SV*; *sarasvati* – oh Sarasvati! (Sayanaacharya and SKP).

Oh Sandhya! Oh goddess Saraswati! May I be released from whatever sinful deeds were committed during the day or night. All the letters we use are your manifestation. You are knowable by this meditation *SV* and you also manifest as Saraswati.

Text

- 13.4. ओजोसि, सहोसि बलमसि, भ्राजोसि देवानां धाम नामासि,
विश्वमसि विश्वायुः सर्वमसि सर्वायुः अभिभूरोम्॥

ojosi, sahosī balamasi, bhrājosi devānāṃ dhāma nāmāsi,
viśvamasi viśvāyuhḥ sarvamasi sarvāyuhḥ abhibhūrom॥

Meaning:

ojaḥ asi – You are the energy in the senses; *sahaḥ asi* – the strength to vanquish all enemies (negative tendencies); *balam asi* – you are the strength; *bhrājāḥ asi* – you are the illumination;

devānāṃ dhāma nāmā-asi – you are the splendour in gods such as Indra; *viśvam asi* – you are the universe; *viśva āyuh* – you are the life for the universe; *sarvam asi* – you are all; *sarva āyuh* – you are the essence of all; *abhibhūḥ om* – you drive away all sins. (As per Sayanacharya and SKP. The meaning is clear).

Text

- 13.5. गायत्रीम्-आवाहयामि - *gāyatrīm-āvāhayāmi*
 सावित्रीम्-आवाहयामि - *sāvitrīm-āvāhayāmi*
 सरस्वतीम्-आवाहयामि - *sarasvatīm-āvāhayāmi*
 छन्दर्षीम्-आवाहयामि - *chandarṣīm-āvāhayāmi*
 श्रियमावाहयामि - *śriyam-āvāhayāmi*

गायत्र्या गायत्री छन्दो विश्वामित्र ऋषिः सविता देवता, अग्निमुखं ब्रह्माशिरः, विष्णुर्हृदयगं रुद्रशिखा, पृथिवी योनिः

gāytryā gāyatrī chando viśvāmitra ṛṣiḥ savitā devatā, agnirmukhaṃ brahmāśiraḥ, viṣṇurhṛdayagaṅ - rudraśikhā, pṛthivī yoniḥ

Meaning:

gāytryā – For the goddess Gayatri; *gāyatrī chandaḥ* – the metre is Gayatri; *viśvāmitra ṛṣiḥ* – the seer of this mantra is Viswamitra; *savitā devatā* – the deity for this mantra is Savita (the Supreme Atman which is the source for all); *agniḥ mukhaṃ* – the mouth is Agni (all *yajña*-s are associated with fire and oblations are offered into the fire); *brahmā-śiraḥ* – the head is Brahma (the creator Brahma, the cosmic function of creation and not the Supreme Brahman); *viṣṇuḥ-hṛdayam* – the heart is Vishnu (the cosmic function of sustenance); *rudraḥ-śikhā* – the tuft is Rudra (the cosmic function of resolution); *pṛthivī yoniḥ* – the organ of origin is the earth.

[The first three invocations mentioning Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswati refer to the same divinity which is called by those names

in the morning, afternoon and in the evening respectively. The hymns and *mantra*-sof *Rig Veda* mention the name of the sage who envisioned it and the name of the deity. Here the deity Savitā should not be mistaken for some or any other god. Etymologically, Savitā is that from which all things originate.]

Text

13.6. प्राणापान-व्यानोदान-समाना-सप्राणा श्वेतवर्णा सांख्यायन सगोत्रा गायत्री
चतुर्विंशत्यक्षरा त्रिपदा षट्कुक्षिः पञ्चशीर्षोपनयने विनियोगः॥

prāṇāpāna-vyānodāna-samānā-sapṛāṇā śvetavarṇā
sāṅkhyāyana sagotrā gāyatrī

caturviṅśatikṣarā tripadā ṣaṭkukṣiḥ
pañcaśīrṣopānayanane viniyogaḥ॥

Meaning:

prāṇa-apāna-vyāna-udāna-samānā-sapṛāṇā - The five vital airs *prāṇa-apāna, vyāna, udāna* and *samāna* exist in her along with other sense organs; *śveta-varṇā* – white in color (*sattva* in nature); *sāṅkhyāyana-sa-gotrā* – the word Sankhyana etymologically means the Supreme Reality realized by the Sankhyas, who analyze the twenty four components in the universe. Gayatri is said to be of the same nature as Supreme Reality; *gāyatrī* – Gayatri; *caturviṅśatikṣarā* – the twenty four components of the universe exist in her; *tri-padā* – the metre Gayatri has three lines; *ṣaṭ-kukṣiḥ* - the six limbs of the Vedas are her belly; *pañca-śīrṣā* – the four Vedas plus the whole corpus of *itihāsa*-s and *purāna*-s taken as one Veda; *upānayanane viniyogaḥ* - the mantra is used to enable the seeker to move near (to attain) the Supreme Reality.

In the term *upānayanam*, *upā* means ‘near’ and *nayanam* means ‘leading’. Thus the word means leading near the Supreme. The Gayatri mantra is used in the ceremony of *upānayanam* as it is the highest means to lead to the Supreme Reality. (As per the

footnote in the *Taittiriya Aranyakam* printed by Anandasrama press, Pune).

Text

13.7.

मं॥ ॐ भूः। ॐ भुवः। ओगं॑ सुवः। ॐ महः। ॐ जनः। ॐ तपः। ओगं॑ सत्यम्।
ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि। धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्।
ॐ आपो ज्योती रसोऽमृतं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवस्सुवरोम् ॥

maṃ॥ Om bhūḥ| Om bhuvah| ogaṃ^१ suvah| Om mahah| Om
janaḥ| Om tapaḥ| ogaṃ^१ satyam|
Om tatsaviturvareṇyaṃ bhargo devasya dhīmahi| dhiyo yo
naḥ pracodayāt|
Om āpo jyotī raso'mṛtaṃ brahma bhūrbhuvassuvarom ॥

(Meaning as explained in step 4 above)

आचम्य, प्राणानायम्य । - *ācamya, prāṇānāyamya* – having performed the ceremonial sipping of water and having done *prāṇāyāma*.

* 14. करन्यासः – *kara-nyāsaḥ* - installing (the deity) in the hands.

[The word *kara* is 'hand', *nyāsa* is to 'keep' or 'install'. Thus the word *kara-nyāsa* means installing something in the hand. Scriptures say - *devo bhūtvā yajet devam*, which means that a person has to be in a pure frame of mind and elevate himself/herself to the level of the deity being worshipped. All the preparatory steps mentioned above are such purifying steps. The way of doing it is to divide the *mantra* into six parts and install them first in the five fingers and in the palm and back of the palm of both hands. Later, in step 15 the same *mantra* is installed in the bodily parts of the person.

Initially one may find this as fanciful. But the resolve of the worshipper is important in all meditations. The principle is that 'whatever is the resolve or visualization, one gets the result accordingly' (*Bhavanopanishad*).]

Text

ॐ तत्सवितुः – ब्रह्मात्मने अङ्गुष्ठाभ्यां नमः - *Om tatsavituh – brahmātmane aṅguṣṭhābhyāṃ namaḥ*

वरेण्यम् – विष्ण्वात्मने तर्जनीभ्यां नमः - *vareṇyam – viṣṇvātmane tarjanībhyāṃ namaḥ*

भर्गो देवस्य – रुद्रात्मने मध्यमाभ्यां नमः - *bhargo devasya – rudrātmane madhyamābhyāṃ namaḥ*

धीमहि – सत्यात्मने अनामिकाभ्यां नमः- *dhīmahi – satyātmane anāmikābhyāṃ namaḥ*

धियो यो नः – ज्ञानात्मने कनिष्ठिकाभ्यां नमः - *dhiyo yo naḥ – jñānātmane kaniṣṭhikābhyāṃ namaḥ*

प्रचोदयात् – सर्वात्मने करतलकरपृष्ठाभ्यां नमः - *pracodayāt – sarvātmane kara-tala-kara-pṛṣṭhābhyāṃ namaḥ*

Meaning:

[The three lines of Gayatri are split into six sections - *tat-savituh*, *vareṇyam*, *bhargo devasya*, *dhīmahi*, *dhiyo yo naḥ* and *pracodayāt*. Each section is visualized as below.]

ॐ तत्सवितुः – ब्रह्मात्मने अङ्गुष्ठाभ्यां नमः - *Om tat-savituh – brahmātmane aṅguṣṭhābhyāṃ namaḥ* - I bow with my two thumbs to the Gayatri which is of the nature of Brahma, the creator. (Here the student has to bring the two thumbs together in the form of a salutation.)

वरेण्यम् – विष्ण्वात्मने तर्जनीभ्यां नमः - *vareṇyam – viṣṇvātmane tarjanībhyāṃ namaḥ* - I bow with my two index fingers to the Gayatri which is of the nature of Vishnu, the sustainer of the universe. (Here the student has to bring the two index fingers together in the form of a salutation.)

भर्गो देवस्य – रुद्रात्मने मध्यमाभ्यां नमः - *bhargo devasya – rudrātmane madhyamābhyāṃ namaḥ* - I bow with my two middle fingers to the Gayatri which is of the nature of Rudra, who resolves

the universe. (Here the student has to bring the two middle fingers together in the form of a salutation.)

धीमहि – सत्यात्मने अनामिकाभ्यां नमः- *dhīmahī – satyātmane anāmikābhyāṃ namaḥ* - I bow with my two ring fingers to the Gayatri which is of the nature of *satyam*, Existence. (Here the student has to bring the two ring fingers together in the form of a salutation.)

धियो यो नः – ज्ञानात्मने कनिष्ठिकाभ्यां नमः - *dhiyo yo naḥ – jñānātmane kaniṣṭhikābhyāṃ namaḥ* - I bow with my two little fingers to the Gayatri which is of the nature of *jñānam*, consciousness. (Here the student has to bring the two little fingers together in the form of a salutation.)

प्रचोदयात् – सर्वात्मने कर-तल-कर-पृष्ठाभ्यां नमः - *pracodayāt – sarvātmane kara-tala-kara-prṣṭhābhyāṃ namaḥ* - I bow with my two palms and back of the palms to the Gayatri which is of the nature of *anantam*, infinity. (Here the student has to bring the two palms and back of the palms together in the form of a salutation. These postures can be seen from a teacher)

[A very important point to note here is that the first three salutations are to the Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra who represent the cosmic trinity, the three-fold cosmic functions of creation, sustenance and resolution. The next three salutations are addressed to *satyam*, *jñānam* and *sarvam* (synonym for *anantam*). These three words *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam* define the Supreme Brahman in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (2-1) as infinitely existing consciousness. In the above six invocations the first three refer to the trinity and the next three move on to the Supreme Brahman. It means that Gayatri has to be meditated upon, not merely as the trinity but also as the Supreme Brahman. Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are the three cosmic functions of creation, sustenance and resolution, which take place against the background of the eternal,

unchanging entity, the consciousness. Here the student is recalling his own nature in relation to that background.

According to some, this practice of *kara-nyāsa* is *tantric* in nature and hence not essential. However, I am of the opinion that this is a very essential exercise for activating the nervous system. These postures are practiced in the Buddhist meditations and interestingly in the south-east Asian martial arts practices.]

* 15. अङ्ग-न्यासः - *aṅga-nyāsaḥ* - Installing (the deity) in the body parts.

[The visualization of the six parts of Gayatri is similar to step 14 above.]

Text

ॐ तत्सवितुः – ब्रह्मात्मने हृदयाय नमः - *Om tatsavituh – brahmātmane hṛdayāya namaḥ*

वरेण्यम् – विष्ण्वात्मने शिरसे स्वाहा - *vareṇyam – viṣṇvātmane śirase svāhā*

भर्गो देवस्य – रुद्रात्मने शिखायै वषट् - *bhargo devasya – rudrātmane śikhāyai vaṣaṭ*

धीमहि – सत्यात्मने कवचाय हुम् - *dhīmahī – satyātmane kavacāya hum*

धियो यो नः – ज्ञानात्मने नेत्रत्रयाय वौषट् - *dhiyo yo naḥ – jñānātmane netratrāyā vaṣaṭ*

प्रचोदयात् – सर्वात्मने अस्त्राय फट् - *pracodayāt – sarvātmane astrāya phaṭ*

भूर्भुवस्सुवरोम् इति दिग्बन्धः - *bhūrbhuvassuvarom iti digbandhaḥ*

Meaning:

ॐ तत्सवितुः – ब्रह्मात्मने हृदयाय नमः- *Om tatsavituh – brahmātmane hṛdayāya namaḥ* - While chanting this the student has to place his right palm on his chest, visualizing that he has installed a part of the mantra (which denotes the creator Brahma) in his heart.

वरेण्यम् – विष्ण्वात्मने शिरसे स्वाहा - *vareṇyam – viṣṇvātmane śirase svāhā* – The student has to place his right palm on his head visualizing that he has installed a part of the mantra (which denotes the Vishnu) in his head.

भर्गो देवस्य – रुद्रात्मने शिखायै वषट् - *bhargo devasya – rudrātmane śikhāyai vaṣaṭ* - The student has to place his palm on his tuft (śikhā) visualizing that he has installed a part of the mantra (which denotes the Rudra) in his tuft.

धीमहि – सत्यात्मने कवचाय हुम् - *dhīmahī – satyātmane kavacāya hum* – The student has to place his both palms on his two shoulders, touching the right shoulder with the left hand and left shoulder with the right visualizing that he has installed a part of the mantra (which denotes the *satyam*) in his shoulders.

धियो यो नः – ज्ञानात्मने नेत्रत्रयाय वौषट् - *dhiyo yo naḥ – jñānātmane netra-trayāya vauṣaṭ* - The student has to touch the two eyes and also the middle of the forehead visualizing that he has installed a part of the mantra (which denotes *jñānam*) in his eyes, visualizing the third eye representing knowledge. This is to activate the eye of knowledge so that one's actions are righteous.

प्रचोदयात् – सर्वात्मने अस्त्राय फट् - *pracodayāt – sarvātmane astrāya phaṭ* - the right palm is taken round the head and brought down with a mild clap on to the left palm visualizing that he has installed a part of the mantra (which denotes *anantam*) in his entire body.

भूर्भुवस्सुवरोम् इति दिग्बन्धः - *bhūr-bhuvas-suar-om*
.... *iti digbandhaḥ* - Here the two index fingers have to be placed
in a hooked condition in the lap of a person (so as not to make
unnecessary movements).

* 16. ध्यानम् - *dhyānam* (Meditation)

Text

16.1. श्लो॥ मुक्ता-विद्रुम-हेम-नील-धवल-च्छायै मुखै-स्त्रीक्षणै
र्युक्ता-मिन्दु-निबद्ध-रत्न-मकुटां तत्त्वार्थ-वर्णात्मिकाम् ।
गायत्रीं वरदाभयाङ्कुश-कशा-शशुभ्रं कपालं गदां
शङ्खं चक्र-मथारविन्द-युगलं हस्तैर्वहन्तीं भजे ॥

ślo|| *muktā-vidruma-hema-nīla-dhavala-cchāyai rmukhai-strīkṣṇai*
ryuktā-mindu-nibaddha-ratna-makuṭāṃ tattvārtha-varṇātmikām ।
gāyatrīṃ varadābhayaṅkuśa-kaśā-śśubhraṃ kapālaṃ gadāṃ
śaṅkhaṃ cakra-mathāravinda-yugalaṃ hastairvahantīṃ bhaje ॥

Meaning:

muktā – Pearl-colored; *vidruma* – ruby-coloured; *hema*
– gold; *nīla* – dark; *dhavala* – white; *chāyaiḥ* - by these colors;
mukhaiḥ - faces; *tri-īkṣṇaiḥ* - with three eyes; *yuktām* – associated
with these; *indu-nibaddha* – decked with moon; *ratna-makuṭāṃ* -
crown studded with gems; *tattva-artha-varṇa-ātmikām* – having
the twenty four letters (*varṇa*) indicating the constituents of
creation; *varada* – posture of hand granting boons; *abhaya* –
posture of hand granting fearlessness; *aṅkuśa* – a goad; *kaśāḥ* - a
whip; *śubhraṃ kapālaṃ* - a clean skull; *gadāṃ* - a mace; *śaṅkhaṃ* -
a conch; *cakram* – circular disc; *atha* – and also; *aravinda-yugalaṃ*
- a pair of lotuses; *hastaiḥ vahantīṃ* - having in her hands; *gāyatrīṃ*
- goddess Gayatri; *bhaje* – I worship.

Gayatri is visualized as having five faces – pearl-colored, ruby-
colored, golden, dark and white in color. Each face has three eyes
– two normal and one in the forehead. Her crown is decked with
gems and with crescent moon. The twenty four letters in the Gayatri

mantra are indicative of the twenty four evolutes in creation. Her ten hands are in different postures. One hand is in *varada-mudra*, the posture of granting boons, one is in the posture of granting fearlessness, the other hands carry a goad, a whip, a skull, a mace, a conch, a circular disc and a pair of lotuses. I meditate on such Gayatri.

[The description is symbolic. Gayatri essentially refers to the *mantra per se*. However, it is visualized as a goddess in order to facilitate meditation. The five faces symbolize the five elements earth, water, fire, air and space, which are the basic constituents which form the whole universe. The twenty four letters of the Gayatri mantra refer to the twenty four constituents which evolve from *prakṛti* as described in Sakhya philosophy of Kapila. The twenty four principles are – 1) *prakṛti*, 2) *mahat* (the seed for the entire universe), 3) the cosmic ego (the idea of self), 4) mind, 5-9) the five sense organs, 10-14) the five motor organs, 15-19) the five subtle elements, 20-24) the five gross elements. The student is advised to refer to any basic text on Indian philosophy in order to have a clear idea of these.

The postures of the hand are symbolic. One hand bestows boons for those who desire the fruit of their *karma*-s. Fearlessness is for the person who is on the path of knowledge, seeking liberation. Fearlessness is the sign of enlightenment. Other objects like goad, whip etc., indicate the aspects of justice, punishing the evil, promoting right action etc. The pair of lotuses indicates the benevolent nature.]

Text

16.2. श्लो॥ यो देव स्सविताऽस्माकं धियो धर्मादिगोचराः ।
प्रेरयेत्तस्य यद्भृगस्तद्वरेण्यमुपास्महे ॥

ślo|| *yo devassavitā'smākaṃ dhiyo-dharmādigocarāḥ ।*
prerayet-tasya yad-bhargas-tad-vareṇyam-upāsmāhe ॥

Meaning:

yaḥ devaḥ - The Supreme Reality which; *śavitā* - is the origin; *asmākaṃ dhīyaḥ* - our intellects; *dharmādi-gocarāḥ* - good and evil activities; *prerayet* - illumines; *tasya* - of that Reality; *yad bhargaḥ* - the illumining consciousness which destroys ignorance; *tad-vareṇyam* - that most desirable; *upāsmahe* - we meditate on.

[This verse tells the meaning of Gayatri mantra in the form of a verse.]

Text

16.3. मुद्रा-प्रदर्शनम् - *mudrā-pradarśanam* - Demonstration of *mudrā-s*

श्लो॥ सुमुखं संपुटं चैव विततं विस्तृतं तथा ।
द्विमुखं त्रिमुखं चैव चतुः पञ्चमुखं तथा ।
षण्मुखोऽधोमुखं चैव व्यापकाञ्जलिकं तथा ॥
शकटं यमपाशं च ग्रथितं सम्मुखोन्मुखम् ।
प्रलम्बं मुष्टिकं चैव मत्स्यः कूर्मो वराहकम् ।
सिंहाक्रान्तम् महाक्रान्तं मुद्गरं पल्लवं तथा ।
चतुर्विंशति मुद्रा वै गायत्र्यां सुप्रतिष्ठिताः ॥

ślo11 *sumukhaṃ saṃpuṭaṃ caiva vitataṃ viśṭṛtaṃ tathā ।*
dvimukhaṃ trimukhaṃ caiva catuḥ pañcamukhaṃ tathā ।
ṣaṇmukho'dhomukhaṃ caiva vyāpakāñjalikaṃ tathā ॥
śakataṃ yama-pāśaṃ ca grathitaṃ sammukhonmukham ।
pralambaṃ muṣṭikaṃ caiva matsyaḥ kūrmo varāhakam ।
siṃhākrāntam mahākrāntaṃ mudgaraṃ pallavaṃ tathā ।
caturviṃśati mudrā vai gāyatryāṃ supratīṣṭhitāḥ ॥

The names of *mudrā-s* are as follows:

1) *sumukhaṃ*, 2) *saṃpuṭaṃ*, (*ca eva* - and) 3) *vitataṃ*, 4) *viśṭṛtaṃ*, (*tathā* - likewise), 5) *dvimukhaṃ*, 6) *trimukhaṃ*, (*ca eva*), 7) *catuḥ*, 8) *pañcamukhaṃ*, (*tathā*), 9) *ṣaṇmukham*, 10)

adhomukhaṃ, (*ca eva*), 11) *vyāpaka-añjalikaṃ*, (*tathā*), 12) *śakaṭaṃ*, 13) *yama-pāśaṃ*, (*ca*) 14) *grathitaṃ*, 15) *sammukha-unmukhaṃ*, 16) *pralambaṃ*, 17) *muṣṭikaṃ*, (*ca eva*), 18) *matsyaḥ*, 19) *kūрмаḥ*, 20) *varāhakaṃ*, 21) *siṃhākrāntaṃ*, 22) *mahākrāntaṃ*, 23) *mudgamaṃ*, 24) *pallavaṃ*, (*tathā*).

catur-viṃśati mudrāḥ – (These) twenty four *mudrā-s*; *gāyatrīyaṃ su-pratiṣṭhitāḥ vai* - are well known for Gayatri.

[The Sanskrit word *mudrā* is a posture, mostly of hands and fingers. Its meaning is given in the following verse:

*modanāt sarva-devānāṃ drāvaṇāt pāpa-saṃhateḥ
tasmān-mudreti sā khyātā sarva-karmārtha-sādhanī*

It means that the performance of *mudrā-s* makes the gods happy. They are said to drive away the sinful deeds and accelerate the result of our righteous *karma*.

Performance of *mudrā-s* is an ancient practice. The tantric literature and yoga texts deal with several *mudrā-s*. The *Natya-shastra* of Bharata muni describes various postures of hands to convey different emotions. These emotions relate to the nine *rasa-s* like romance, humor, fear, horror etc. Those familiar with Indian classical dance are familiar with these *mudrā-s*. In the *SV*, which of the nature of meditation, the student is meditating on the Supreme Reality and hence the mood in his mind is one of philosophical contemplation and devotion. Hence the *mudrā-s* should also convey such meaning. However, the commentaries on *SV* have been silent about the meaning, though they have described the method of performing them.

The twenty four *mudrā-s* in *SV* are various postures of hands and fingers. It is not clear whether these twenty four represent the twenty four principles of Sankhya philosophy. Some feel that the performance of these *mudrā-s* is optional. However, I strongly

recommend them as they are highly helpful for stimulating the nervous system.

Such exercises are probably introduced by our ancients in order to shake off the lethargy of the practitioner. Generally only those who are associated with martial duties perform physical exercises while most others neglect them. Hence the ancients seem to have included exercises like *prāṇāyāma*, *mudrā-s* and *Surya-namaskāra-s* as part of the rituals. Performance of *Surya-namaskāra-s* is compulsory in the *Aruna-prashna* of *Taittiriya Aranyakam*. The body-mind-complex has to be in a fit condition and as Kalidasa says - *śarīramādyaṃ khalu dharmasādhanam* – the body is the primary tool for achieving any human goal.

The pictures of the above *mudrā-s* can be seen in the Annexure.]

Text

16.4. श्लो॥ गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णु-गुरु-देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुस्साक्षात्परंब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥

ślo|| *gururbrahmā gurur-viṣṇur-gurur-devo maheśvaraḥ* ।
gurus-sākṣāt-param-brahma tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ ॥

Meaning:

guruḥ - The guru is; *brahmā* – the creator Brahma; *guruḥ* - the guru; *viṣṇuḥ* - is Vishnu; *guruḥ* - the guru; *devaḥ maheśvaraḥ* - is the god Maheswara; *guruḥ* - the guru; *sākṣāt* – is truly; *param brahma* – the Supreme Brahman; *tasmai* – for that; *śrī gurave* – eminent guru; *namaḥ* - I salute.

The guru is *Brahmā*, he is Vishnu, he is Iswara and he is indeed the Supreme Brahman. I salute that eminent guru.

[It is very important to understand this basic verse. Here the word Brahma is mentioned twice, in the first line and again

in the second line. What is the difference between *Brahmā* with the elongated *ā* and Brahma with short letter *a*? The *Brahmā* mentioned in the first line refers to the creator Brahma whereas the Brahma referred to in the second line refers to the Supreme Reality called Brahman.

Upanishads postulate that the Supreme Reality is not a personal god but an impersonal entity which is of the nature of infinitely existing consciousness (*Taittiriya Upanishad* 2-1). This consciousness has a manifesting power which is inexplicable. In this manifestation there appear to be three cosmic functions – creation, sustenance and dissolution. The names given to these three cosmic functions are Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. These three are visualized as deities with forms. For instance, Brahma is visualized as god with four heads, having goddess Saraswati as his consort. Vishnu is visualized as staying in milk-ocean along with his consort Lakshmi. Similarly, Rudra is visualized as person staying on the mount Kailasa along with his consort Parvati. The Supreme Reality is above these three forms.

In the above verse the guru is praised as someone on par with the Supreme Brahman because it is he who guides the seeker and enables him to realize Brahman. Realizing Brahman is said to be the highest goal in human life, according to the Indian tradition.]

** 17. गायत्री जपः - *gāyatrī japah* (The chanting of Gayatri)

[This is the most important step in the *SV*. The chanting of Gayatri is done mentally, making an effort to concentrate on the meaning of it. The meaning of *japa*, as defined by Patanjali is *taj-japas-tadartha-bhāvanam* (1-28) – ‘*japa* implies contemplation of the meaning (of a syllable or *mantra*)’. Patanjali has told it in the context of meditation on Om. The commentators on Patanjali sutra-s have also explained how Om represents the Supreme Brahman which manifests as Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra.

Some people use the string of beads (*japa-mālā*) in order to count the number of chants. There is also a prescribed way of rolling the string. Some others count on the fingers. These procedures have to be learnt by observing a teacher. It is usually recommended to chant it for 108 times at this stage. Some people say that a specific count is necessary and some others say that it is more important to keep the mind away from all other thoughts and concentrate on the meaning of the mantra.]

Text

ॐ भूर्भुवस्सुवः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Om bhūrbhuvassuṣvaḥ | tatsaviturvareṇyaṃ bhargo devasya dhīmahi | dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ॥

[The meaning can be seen in step 4 above.]

* 18. जपावसानम् – *japāvasānam* – the end of meditation

आचम्य, प्राणानायम्य - *ācamya, prāṇānāyamyā* – having performed the ceremonial sipping of water and having done *prāṇāyāma* -

Text

18.1. पूर्वोक्त एवंगुण विशेषण विशिष्टायां शुभतिथौ ममोपात्त-दुरित-क्षय-द्वारा श्रीपरमेश्वर प्रीत्यर्थं प्रातः (माध्याह्निक/सायं) सन्ध्याङ्ग-गायत्री महामन्त्र जपावसानं करिष्ये । भूर्भुवस्सुवरोमिति दिग्विमोकः

pūrvokta evaṅguṇa viśeṣaṇa viśiṣṭhāyāṃ śubhatithau mamopātta-durita-kṣaya-dvārā śrīparameśvara prītyartham prātaḥ (mādhyāhnikā/sāyaṃ) sandhyāṅga-gāyatrī mahāmantra japāvasānaṃ kariṣye | bhūrbhuvassuvaromiti digvimokaḥ

Meaning:

pūrvokta – The aforesaid; *evaṅ-guṇa viśeṣaṇa viśiṣṭhāyāṃ śubha-tithau* – on this auspicious day associated with the qualities

mentioned; *mama-upātta* - accrued to me; *durita* - sins, *kṣaya-dvārā* - by destroying (sins); *śrī-parameśvara-prītyarthaṃ* - in order to please the Supreme being; *prātaḥ* (*mādhyāhnikā/sāyam*) *sandhyāṅga* - as part of the *SV* in the morning/afternoon/evening; *gāyatrī mahā-mantra japāvasānaṃ kariṣye* - I conclude the meditation on the great Gayatri mantra; *bhūr-bhavas-suvar-om-iti dig-vimokaḥ* - releasing the two hooked fingers while saying *Om bhūḥ bhuvāḥ*.

[Meaning is clear.]

Text

18.2. ध्यानम् – *dhyānam*

श्लो॥ मुक्ता-विद्रुम-हेम-नील-धवल-च्छायै मुखै-स्त्रीक्षणै
र्युक्ता-मिन्दु-निबद्ध-रत्न-मकुटां तत्त्वार्थ-वर्णात्मिकाम् ।
गायत्रीं वरदाभयाङ्कुश-कशा-शशुभ्रं कपालं गदां
शङ्खं चक्र-मथारविन्द-युगलं हस्तैर्वहन्तीं भजे ॥

ślo|| *muktā-vidruma-hema-nīla-dhavala-cchāyai rmukhai-striḥṣaṇai
ryuktā-mindu-nibaddha-ratna-makuṭāṃ tattvārtha-varṇātmikām ।
gāyatrīṃ varadābhayāṅkuśa-kaśā-śśubhraṃ kapālaṃ gadāṃ
śaṅkhaṃ cakra-mathāravinda-yugalaṃ hastairvahantīṃ bhaje ॥*

Meaning:

[The meaning of this verse may be seen step 16.1 above.]

Text

18.3. श्लो॥ यो देव स्सविताऽस्माकं धियो धर्मादिगोचराः ।
प्रेरयेत्तस्य यद्भूर्ग स्तद्वरेण्य मुपास्महे ॥

ślo|| *yo deva ssavitā'smākaṃ dhiyo dharmādigocarāḥ ।
prerayettasya yadbhūrg stadvareṇya muṣāsmāhe ॥*

Meaning:

[The meaning of this verse may be seen 16.2 above.]

Text

18.4. मुद्राप्रदर्शनम् - *mudrā-pradarśanam* - Demonstration of *mudrā-s*

श्लो॥ सुरभिर्ज्ञान नेत्रं च योनिः कूर्मोऽथ पङ्कजम् ।
लिङ्गं निर्याणमुद्रा चेत्यष्टमुद्राः प्रकीर्तिताः ॥
तत्सद्-ब्रह्मार्पणमस्तु

ślo॥ *surabhirjñāna netraṃ ca yoniḥ kūrmo'ṣṭha paṅkajam ।*
liṅgaṃ niryāṇamudrā cetyaṣṭamudrāḥ prakīrtitāḥ ॥
tat-sad-brahmārpaṇam-astu

Following are the names of eight *mudrā-s*:

1) *surabhiḥ*, 2) *jñānam*, 3) *netram*, (*ca* - and) 4) *yoniḥ*,
5) *kūrmah*, (*atha*) 6) *paṅkajam*, 7) *liṅgam*, 8) *niryāṇa-mudrā*, *ca*
iti – thus; *aṣṭa-mudrāḥ* - eight *mudrā-s*; *prakīrtitāḥ* - are extolled.

tat-sad-brahmārpaṇam-astu – all this is an offering to
Brahman.

[The *mudrā-s* may be seen in the Annexure. For S.No.3, some
texts say *cakram* instead of *netram*. We can accept one of them as
per our tradition.

The meanings are not mentioned in any of the commentaries
but I wish to hazard a guess based on the *Upanishadic* philosophy.
In *SV* we are talking about a person who is practising what
Vedanta calls *brahmābhyaśa*, the practice to see one's self as not
different from Brahman and to see everything in the universe as a
manifestation in Brahman. Hence such guess becomes meaningful.

1) *surabhiḥ* - is the mythological wish-fulfilling cow. A realized
person goes beyond desires. Knowledge is like the divine wish-
fulfilling cow.

2) *jñānam* – It refers to the knowledge of Brahman which the
student wishes to attain.

3) *netram* – The common meaning of the word is eye which helps us in all our movements. Etymologically, it means *nayati trāyate iti netram* – that which leads and protects. Knowledge of Brahman is what guides a person in his actions.

4) *yonih* - This is a recurring word in Vedanta. It means the source or origin of all things. Brahman is the source for all things. *SV* is the process leading to such knowledge.

5) *kūrmah* - Lord Vishnu is said to have taken up the *avatār* of a tortoise at the time of churning of ocean. It symbolizes the support for the entire universe. The churning of ocean is actually the churning of mind in which the good (deva-s) and the bad (asura-s) take part and clash. The support for all this is the tortoise.

6) *pañkajam* – It means a lotus. Lotus is a well known symbol of knowledge in the scriptures.

7) *liṅgam* – The normal meaning is that ellipsoid which has no specific shape and which is said to denote Lord Shiva. Much has been written on the symbolism of *liṅga*. It refers to the formless and infinite nature of the Supreme Reality.

8) *niryāṇa* – Etymologically it means a journey. According to Vedanta liberation is not a movement to a heavenly world. Liberation is merely an awareness of Brahman even when a person is alive. It is not a state achieved after death. *Upanishads* use the word in the sense of realization only.]

** 19. सूर्योपस्थानम् – *sūryopasthānam* – Standing in front of Sun and worshipping him .

[The *mantra*-s are different in the morning, afternoon and in the evening *SV*. The student has to stand facing the Sun during this. These *mantra*-s have to be chanted following the prescribed incantation and they have to be learnt from a teacher.

The above *mantra*-s are from the *Taittiriya saṃhitā* of *Yajurveda*. The word to word meaning may look cumbersome

because it is in Vedic Sanskrit, which is different from the classical Sanskrit of the later period.

The name Mitra normally refers to the Sun god but in this context it is not the Sun god seen in the mythologies but it refers to the Supreme Reality manifesting in the entire universe. The brightest manifestation in the universe from the point of view of the human being is the Sun. This deity guides our lives and all our activities. He pervades the whole earth and the intermediate space. The human being who follows the cosmic order and discipline as demonstrated by the Sun would never get defeated in any sense.

The mantra-s are different for the three *sandhya*-s.]

19.1 प्रातः सूर्योपस्थानम् - *prātaḥ sūryopasthānam* – Worshipping Sun in the morning.

Text

मं ॥ मित्रस्य चर्षणी धृत श्श्रवो-देवस्य सानसिम् सत्यं चित्रश्रव-स्तमम् ।
मित्रो जनान् यातयति प्रजानन् मित्रो दाधार पृथिवी मुत द्याम् ।
मित्रः कृष्टीरनिमिषाभिचष्टे सत्याय हव्यं घृतवद्विधेम ।
प्रसमित्र मर्तो अस्तु प्रयस्वान् यस्त आदित्यः शिक्षति व्रतेन ।
न हन्यते न जीयतेत्वोतो नैनमगंश्हो अश्रोत्यन्तितो न दूरात् ॥

maṃ ॥ *mitrasya carṣaṇī dhṛta śśravo-devasya sānasim satyaṃ citraśrava-stamam ।*
mitro janān yātayati prajānan mitro dādadhāra pṛthivī muta dyām ।
mitraḥ kṛṣṭīranimiṣābhicaṣṭe satyāya havyaṃ ghṛtavadvidhema ॥
prasamitra marto astu prayasvān yasta ādityaḥ śikṣati vratena ।
na hanyate na jīyatetvoto nainamagaṃśho aśrotyantito na dūrāt ॥

Meaning:

mitrasya devasya – Of Mitra, the great deity; *carṣaṇī-dhṛtaḥ* - bestowing all needs to all beings; *sānasim* – praise-worthy; *satyaṃ* - the nature of being non-negatable at any time; *citra-śrava-stamam* – whose fame is astonishing to know; *śravaḥ* - I praise.

mitraḥ - the deity Mithra; *prajānan* – the omniscient; *janān yātayati* – directs people into their actions;

mitraḥ - Mithra; *dādhāra* – has supported; *pr̥thivīm uta dyām* – the earth and the sky;

mitraḥ - Mithra; *kṛṣṭīḥ* - people; *animiṣā abhicaṣṭe* – takes care never closing his eyes;

satyāya – for such non-negatable reality; *havyam* - oblations; *ghṛtavat* – filled with ghee; *vidhema* – we offer;

āditya – Oh Aditya! *sa mitra* – oh Mithra! *pra śikṣati* - worships; *martaḥ* - a person; *yaḥ* - the person who; *te* – to you; *vratena* – very sincerely; *astu prayasvān* – may he attain the fruit of such worship;

tvotaḥ - the person protected by you; *na hanyate* – is never distressed; *na jīyate* – never defeated; *na enam amhaḥ aśnoti* – sin never touches him; *antito na dūrāt* – either closely or distantly.

I sing the praise of the great deity Mithra (Sun), the eternal reality, who is bestowing the needs of all beings and whose fame is astonishing to note.

Mithra, the omniscient, directs all beings into their activities. Mithra supports the earth and the sky.

Never closing his eyes, he takes care of all beings.

We offer the ghee filled oblations to such eternal reality.

Oh Mithra! Oh Aditya! May the person who worships you sincerely attain the fruit of such worship.

The person protected by you is never distressed, never defeated and sin never touches him either closely or distantly (sins of the present birth or of earlier births).

[It may be interesting to note that Mithra was the god in ancient Persia. Mithra worship reached Rome where the name of the religion was Mithraism even in the fourth century CE till the

advent of Christianity. Sun was the god for the Egyptians too. It is possible that the Vedic god Mithra was adopted in other cultures.]

19.2. माध्याह्निक सूर्योपस्थानम् - *mādhyaḥnika sūryopasthānam* –
Worshipping Sun in the afternoon.

Text

19.2.a.मं॥ i) आ सत्येन रजसा वर्तमानो निवेशयन्नमृतं मर्त्यं च ।
हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेनाऽदेवो याति भुवना विपश्यन् ।
ii) उद्वयं तमसस्परि पश्यन्तो ज्योतिरुत्तरम् । देवं देवत्रा
सूर्यमगन्म ज्योतिरुत्तमम् ।
iii) उदुत्यं जातवेदसं देवं वहन्ति केतवः ।
दृशे विश्वाय सूर्यं चित्रं देवानामुदगादनीकं
चक्षुर्मित्रस्य वरुणस्याग्नेः । आऽप्राद्यावा पृथिवी
अन्तरिक्षगश् सूर्य आत्मा जगत स्तस्थुषश्च ।

माम्॥ *ā satyena rajasā vartamāno niveśayannamṛtaṃ martyaṃ ca |*
hiranyayena savitā rathenā’devo yāti bhuvanā vipāśyan |
udvayaṃ tamasaṣpari paśyanto jyotiruttaraṃ | devaṃ devatra
sūryamaganma jyotiruttamam | udutyaṃ jātavedasaṃ devaṃ
vahanti ketavaḥ | dṛṣe viśvāya sūryaṃ citraṃ devānā mudagādanīkaṃ
caḥṣurmitrasya varuṇasyāgneḥ | ā’prādyāvā pṛthivī
antarikṣagaś sūrya ātmā jagata stasthuṣaśca |

Meaning:

satyena rajasā – With eternal effulgence; *ā vartamānaḥ* –
moving in space; *niveśayan amṛtaṃ martyaṃ ca* – enlivening
the gods and humans; *savitā* – the creator, the giver of all needs;
hiranyayena rathena – on a golden chariot; *devaḥ* - such divine
entity; *ā yāti* – comes; *bhuvanā vipāśyan* – supervising all the
worlds.

Moving in space with eternal effulgence, enlivening the gods
and humans, Savita (the creator), the giver of all needs of all beings
arrives on a golden chariot supervising all the worlds.

vayaṃ - We; *ut paśyantah* - meditating upon; *jyotiḥ uttaraṃ* - the effulgence which is beyond; *tamaśaḥ pari* – beyond *tamas* (ignorance); *devatrā devaṃ* - the most effulgent among deities; *jyotiḥ uttamam* – the most luminous; *sūryam* – Sun; *aganma* – seek his protection for enlightenment.

We meditate on the effulgence which is beyond *tamas*. He is the most effulgent among deities. We see protection under such most luminous Sun.

tyaṃ - Such; *jātavedasaṃ* - the god of Fire; *devaṃ* - divinity; *ketavaḥ* - the Sun's rays; *ut vahanti* – carry; *sūryaṃ* - the Sun; *ḍṛṣe viśvāya* – to enable all beings to see him.

(In the evening) Sun's rays carry the effulgence into Fire and again bring the Sun back on the next morning for all the people to see.

citraṃ - The multi-colored; *devānām anikaṃ* - the multitude of rays; *udagāt* – arose. *caḥṣuḥ* - That is the eye; *mitrasya* – of Mithra; *varuṇasya* – of Varuna; *agneḥ* - and of Agni. *sūryaḥ* - The Sun; *ā prāḥ* - self-luminous; *dyāvā pṛthivī antarikṣam* – pervades the sky, the earth and the intermediate space; *ātmā* – the indwelling self; *jagataḥ tasthuṣaḥ ca* – of the sentient and insentient.

The orb of multitude of rays with multiple colors has arisen. That orb is the eye of Mithra, of Varna and of Agni. The self-luminous Sun pervades the sky, the earth and the intermediate space. He is the indwelling self of the sentient and insentient.

[The above three *mantra*-s are also from the *Maha Narayanopanishad*, which is a part of *Taittiriya Āraṇyaka* of *Yajurveda*. The overall meaning is as follows.]

- i) The Sun, symbolizing *satyam* (the Brahman) is the life force for all the humans and gods. He with his effulgent orb moves in the sky enabling people of all the worlds to go about

their activities. He moves in the sky in his golden chariot, supervising the actions of all.

- ii) We, seeking liberation, take refuge under the effulgent deity, Surya, the most effulgent among gods, in order to transcend darkness (ignorance).
- iii) The Sun's rays reach the Agni (in the evening) and again get restored to the Sun (in the morning) in order to brighten up the whole universe. Such rays of the solar orb are like the eyes for a) the Sun, the presiding deity of the day, b) for Varuna, the presiding deity of night and c) for Agni. The Sun moves in such orb as the indwelling self of all beings, illumining all the worlds (SKP).

Text

19.2.b. मं॥ तच्चक्षुर्देवहितं पुरस्ताच्छुक्रमुच्चरत् ।
पश्येम शरदशशतं जीवेम शरदशशतं नन्दाम शरदशशतं
मोदाम शरदशशतं भवाम शरदशशतगं शृण्वाम
शरदशशतं प्रब्रवाम शरदशशतमजीतास्स्यम शरदशशतं
ज्योक्च सूर्यं दृशे । य उदगान्महतोर्णवा द्विभ्राजमान
स्सरिरस्य मध्यात्समावृषभो लोहिताक्ष
स्सूर्योविपश्चिन्मनसा पुनातु ।

maṃ॥ *taccakṣurdevahitaṃ purastācchukramuccarat ।*
paśyema śaradaśśataṃ jīveṃ śaradaśśataṃ nandāma śaradaśśataṃ
modāma śaradaśśataṃ bhavāma śaradaśśatagaṃ śṛṇvāma
śaradaśśataṃ prabravāma śaradaśśatam ajitāḥ syāma śaradaśśataṃ
vyokca sūryaṃ dṛśe । ya udagānmahato'rṇavā dvibhrajamāna
ssarirasya madhyātsamāvṛṣabho lohitaḥkṣa
ssūryovipaścīnmanasā punātu ।

Meaning:

cakṣuḥ - The eye of the whole universe; *devahitaṃ* - which illumines the sense organs; *purastāt* - in the east; *śukram uccarat*

– rising in all brightness; *tat* – that (solar orb); *paśyema* – may we see; *śaradaḥ-śataṃ* - for hundred years.

Sun who is the eye of the whole universe, is rising in all brightness illumining the senses of all beings. May we see him for hundred years.

jīvema śaradaḥ-śataṃ - May we live for hundred years.

nandāma śaradaḥ-śataṃ - May we be happy (with children, wealth etc) for hundred years.

modāma śaradaḥ-śataṃ - May we live contended for hundred years.

bhavāma śaradaḥ-śataṃ - May we be strong for hundred years.

śṛṇvāma śaradaḥ-śataṃ - May we listen to good things for hundred years.

prabravāma śaradaḥ-śataṃ - May we tell good things for hundred years.

ajitāḥ syāma śaradaḥ-śataṃ - May we live unconquered for hundred years.

jyok ca sūryaṃ dṛśe - May we see the bright Sun for hundred years.

yaḥ - The one who (the Sun); *udagāt* – arose; *mahataḥ arṇavāt* – from the mighty ocean; *vibhrājamānaḥ* - with all brightness; *sarirasya madhyāt* – from the middle of waters; *saḥ* - such; *mā* - me; *vṛṣabhaḥ* - one who fulfils all desires of all beings; *lohitākṣaḥ* - with red rays; *sūryaḥ* - the Sun; *vipāścīt* – the omniscient; *manasā punātu* – protect me with a kind heart.

May the Sun who is arising in all brightness from the mighty ocean, from the middle of waters – the Sun who fulfils the desires of all beings, the omniscient Sun with bright red rays – protect me with a kind heart.

19.3. सायं सूर्योपस्थानम् - *sāyaṃ sūryopasthānam* – Worshipping Sun in the evening.

Text

19.3.a मं॥ इमं मे वरुण शृधी हव मद्या च मृडय ।
त्वामवस्युराचके ।
तत्त्वायामि ब्रह्मणा वंदमानस्तदाशास्ते यजमानो हविर्भिः ।
अहेडमानो वरुणेह बोध्युरुशगं स मा न आयुः प्रमोषीः ।

maṃ॥ *imaṃ me varuṇa śṛdhī hava madyā ca mṛḍaya ।*
tvāmavasyurācake ।
tattvāyāmi brahmaṇā vaṇdamānastadāśāste ya
jamāno havirbhiḥ ।
ahedaṃāno varuṇeha bodhyurusagaṅ sa mā na
āyuh pramoṣīḥ

Meaning:

varuṇa - Oh Varuna! *imaṃ me havam* – this my prayer; *śṛdhī* – listen (accept); *adyā ca mṛḍaya* – and also protect me now.

avasyuh - Desiring protection; *tvām ācake* – I pray to you.

tat – For that; *brahmaṇā vaṇdamānaḥ* - by worshipping you with the Vedic mantra-s; *tvā yāmi* – I am taking refuge under you.

tat- For that; *yajamānaḥ havirbhiḥ* - offering oblations; *āśāste* – I am requesting you.

varuṇa – Oh Varuna! *ahedaṃānaḥ* - without disregard; *iha bodhi* – please keep my request in mind.

uru-śamsa – Oh praiseworthy (Varuna)! *mā pramoṣīḥ* - do not take away; *naḥ āyuh* - our life span.

[The meaning is clear.]

19.3.b. Text

यच्चिद्धिते विशो यथा प्रदेव वरुण व्रतम् ।
मिनीमसि द्यवि द्यवि । यत्किं चेदं
वरुण दैव्ये जनेऽभिद्रोहं मनुष्याश्चरामसि ।
अचित्ती यत्तव धर्मा युयोपि म मा नस्तस्मादेनसो देव रीरिषः।
कितवासो यद्विरिपुर्नदीवि यद्वाघा सत्यमुत यन्नविद्म ।
सर्वा ता विष्य शिथिरेव देवाऽथातेस्याम वरुण प्रियासः ॥

*yacciddhite viśo yathā pradeva varuṇa vratam ।
minīmasi dyavi dyavi । yatkiṃ cedaṃ
varuṇa daivye jane'bhidrohaṃ manuṣyāścarāmasi ।
acittī yattava dharmā yuyopi ma mā nastasmādenaso deva rīriṣaḥ।
kitavāso yadriripurnadīvi yadvāghā satyamuta yannavidma ।
sarvā tā viṣya śithireva devā'thātesyāma varuṇa priyāsaḥ ॥*

Meaning:

deva varuṇa – Oh god Varuna! *yaccid hi te pra vratam* – your worship which has been prescribed; *viśaḥ yathā* – just as people show interest in their own work; *dyavi dyavi* – every day; *minīmasi* – we perform it with such interest.

Oh Varuna! We perform your worship with great interest just as people perform their own work with all interest.

varuṇa – Oh Varuna! *yat-kiṃ ca* – whatever; *idaṃ* - this; *daivye jane* – in you, the divine being; *manuṣyāḥ* - we ignorant humans; *abhidrohaṃ carāmasi* – violating your dharma; *acittī* – out of ignorance; *yat tava dharmāḥ* - your dharma; *yuyopi ma* – failed to perform; *tasmāt enasaḥ* - from that sin; *deva* – oh God! *naḥ mā rīriṣaḥ* - do not punish us.

Oh divine being Varuna! If we ignorant humans have committed any dereliction of your dharma, do not punish us for that failure.

varuṇa – Oh Varuna! *kitavāsaḥ* - by being deceitful; *yat riripuḥ nadīvi* – whatever action we failed to perform; *yat vā* – or else; *aghā* – sin; *satyam uta yat na vidma* – done knowingly or unknowingly; *sarvāḥ tāḥ* - all those; *viṣya* – destroy them; *śithireva* – like ruins; *deva* – oh divine being! *atha* – thereafter; *te syāma priyāsaḥ* - we will be loved by you.

Oh Varuna! If by being deceitful, we failed to perform any of our duties to you or committed any sin knowingly or unknowingly, we request you to destroy all such sins, turn them into ruins so that we will deserve your love and grace.

[As noted elsewhere, the prayer is not to Varuna but to the Supreme Being as the traditional commentators have pointed out.]

20. दिङ्मस्कः - *diṅnamaskāraḥ* - Salutation to all directions

Text

मं॥ ॐ नमः प्राच्यै दिशे याश्च देवता
एतस्यां प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*Om namaḥ prācyai diśe yāśca devatā
etasyāṃ prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

Meaning:

Om namaḥ prācyai diśe – I bow to the eastern direction; *yāḥ ca devatāḥ* - and to the deities; *etasyāṃ prativasanti* – who are in this direction; *etābhyaḥ ca namaḥ* - salutations for them too.

Text

नमो दक्षिणायै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*namo dakṣiṇāyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyāṃ
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

Meaning:

namaḥ dakṣiṇāyai diśe – I bow to the southern direction; *yāḥ ca devatāḥ* - and to the deities; *etasyāṃ prativasanti* – who are in this direction; *etābhyaḥ ca namaḥ* - salutations for them too.

Text

नमः प्रतीच्यै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*namaḥ pratīcyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyāṃ
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

Meaning:

namaḥ pratīcyai diśe – I bow to the western direction; *yāḥ ca devatāḥ* - and to the deities; *etasyāṃ prativasanti* – who are in this direction; *etābhyaḥ ca namaḥ* - salutations for them too.

Text

नम उदीच्यै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*nama udīcyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyāṃ
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

Meaning:

namaḥ udīcyai diśe – I bow to the northern direction; *yāḥ ca devatāḥ* - and to the deities; *etasyāṃ prativasanti* – who are in this direction; *etābhyaḥ ca namaḥ* - salutations for them too.

Text

नम ऊर्द्वायै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*nama ūrdvāyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyāṃ
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

Meaning:

namaḥ ūrdvāyai diśe – I bow to the upper direction; *yāḥ ca devatāḥ* - and to the deities; *etasyāṃ prativasanti* – who are in this direction; *etābhyaḥ ca namaḥ* - salutations for them too.

Text

नमोऽधरायै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*namo'dharāyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyāṃ
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

Meaning:

namaḥ adharāyai diśe – I bow to the lower direction; *yāḥ ca devatāḥ* - and to the deities; *etasyāṃ prativasanti* – who are in this direction; *etābhyaḥ ca namaḥ* - salutations for them too.

Text

नमोऽवान्तरायै दिशे याश्च देवता एतस्यां
प्रतिवसन्त्येताभ्यश्च नमो

*namo'vāntarāyai diśe yāśca devatā etasyāṃ
prativasantyetābhyaśca namo*

Meaning:

namaḥ avāntarāyai diśe – I bow to all the intermediate directions (north-east etc.); *yāḥ ca devatāḥ* - and to the deities; *etasyāṃ prativasanti* – who are in this direction; *etābhyaḥ ca namaḥ* - salutations for them too.

[There are two versions of *Maha Narayanopaishad*, as mentioned in Chapter-I. Elaborate salutations to all the deities in all directions are not seen in the Dravida version whereas they are seen in the version followed in other areas. The Dravida version is simpler and seems to be more appropriate.]

21. मुनि नमस्कारम् - *muni namaskāram* – Salutations to sages

Text

नमो गङ्गा यमुनयोर्मध्ये ये वसन्ति ते मे प्रसन्नात्मानः चिरंजीवितं
वर्धयन्ति नमो गङ्गायमुनयो मुनिभ्यश्च नमो नमो गङ्गा यमुनयो
मुनिभ्यश्च नमः ।

*namo gaṅgā yamunayormadhye ye vasanti te me
prasannātmānaḥ ciraṃjīvitam vardhayanti namo gaṅgāyamunayo
rmunibhyaśca namo namo gaṅgā yamunayo rmunibhyaśca namaḥ ।*

Meaning:

namaḥ - Salutations; *gaṅgā-yamunayoḥ madhye ye vasanti*
– to those who dwell in the region between Ganga and Yamuna;
te me prasanna-ātmānaḥ - may they be benevolent to me; *ciraṃ-*
jīvitam vardhayanti – give me a long life; *namaḥ gaṅgā-yamunayoḥ*
munibhyaḥ ca namaḥ - salutations to sages in the region of Ganga
and Yamuna; *namaḥ gaṅgā-yamunayoḥ munibhyaḥ ca namaḥ* -
salutations to sages in the region of Ganga and Yamuna.

Meanings are clear.

22. देवता नमस्कारम् - *devatā namaskāram* – Salutations to deities

Text and Meanings

संध्यायै नमः । सावित्र्यै नमः । गायत्र्यै नमः ।
saṃdhyāyai namaḥ । sāvitryai namaḥ । gāyatryai namaḥ ।

Salutations to Sandhya, Savitri and Gayatri.

सरस्वत्यै नमः । सर्वाभ्यो देवताभ्यो नमः । देवेभ्यो नमः ।
sarasvatyai namaḥ । sarvābhyo devatābhyo namaḥ । devebhyo namaḥ ।

Salutations to Saraswati, salutations to all gods and goddesses.

ऋषिभ्यो नमः । मुनिभ्यो नमः । गुरुभ्यो नमः ।
ṛṣibhyo namaḥ । munibhyo namaḥ । gurubhyo namaḥ ।

Salutations to the seers (of *mantra*-s) and sages. Salutations to teachers.

पितृभ्यो नमः । कामोऽकार्षीन्नमो नमः । मन्युरकार्षीन्नमो नमः ।

pitṛbhyo namaḥ । *kāmo'kārṣīnnaṃ namaḥ* ।
manyurakārṣīnnaṃ namaḥ ।

pitṛbhyāḥ namaḥ - Salutations to forefathers; *kāmaḥ akārṣīt* – any wrongs committed are due to desire; *namaḥ namaḥ* - I pray to the presiding deity of desire; *manyuḥ akārṣīt* – any wrongs committed are due to anger; *namaḥ namaḥ* - I pray to the presiding deity of anger.

[The idea is to overcome desire and anger in our daily life by being constantly aware of their operation in our minds.]

23. ईश्वर ध्यानम् - *īśvara dhyānam* – Meditation on the cosmic being
Text

23.1. पृथिव्यापस्तेजोवायुराकाशात् ॥ *pṛthivyāpastejovāyurākāśāt*

Meaning:

pṛthivī – (Salutations to) Earth; *āpaḥ* - water; *tejaḥ* - fire; *vāyuh* - air; *ākāśāt* – and space.

Text

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय । *Om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya* ।

Meaning:

Salutations to the Supreme Reality which indwells all things and which is denoted by the symbol Om.

[As noted above, Om denotes the Supreme Reality. The etymological meaning of the name Vāsudeva is ‘the one which indwells the whole creation, sentient and insentient’. Etymologically, the word *bhagavān* means ‘the omnipotent, omniscient entity’.]

Text

श्लो॥ यागंसदा सर्वभूतानि चराणि स्थावराणि च ।
सायं प्रातर्नमस्यन्ति सा मा सन्ध्याऽभिरक्षतु ॥

ślo॥ *yāgaṁsadā sarvabhūtāni carāṇi sthāvarāṇi ca ।
sāyaṁ prātarnamasyanti sāmā sandhyā'bhiraḥṣatu ॥*

Meaning:

yāṁ - The divinity whom; *sadā sarva-bhūtāni* - all beings, always; *carāṇi sthāvarāṇi ca* - the moving and non-moving; *sāyaṁ prātaḥ* - in the morning and evening; *namasyanti* - worship; *sāmā sandhyā abhiraḥṣatu* - such divine *sandhyā* protect me.

23.2. शिव-केशव-अभेद-स्मरणम् - *śiva-keśava-abheda-smaraṇam* - contemplation of the non-difference between Shiva and Vishnu.

Text

श्लो॥ शिवाय विष्णुरूपाय शिवरूपाय विष्णवे ।
शिवस्य हृदयं विष्णुर्विष्णोश्च हृदयगं शिवः ॥

ślo॥ *śivāya viṣṇurūpāya śivarūpāya viṣṇave ।
śivasya hrdayaṁ viṣṇu rviṣṇośca hrdayagaṁ śivaḥ ॥*

Meaning:

śivāya viṣṇu-rūpāya - Salutations to Shiva who is of the form of Vishnu; *śiva-rūpāya viṣṇave* - and salutations to Vishnu who is of the form of Shiva; *śivasya hrdayaṁ viṣṇuḥ* - the heart (essence) of Shiva is Vishnu; *viṣṇoḥ ca hrdayaṁ śivaḥ* - and the heart (essence) of Vishnu is Shiva.

[This exemplifies the spirit of tolerance and harmonization in the Indian tradition.]

Text

23.3. श्लो॥ नमो ब्रह्मण्यदेवाय गोब्राह्मणहिताय च ।
जगद्धिताय कृष्णाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः॥

ślo|| *namo brahmaṇyadevāya gobrāhmaṇahitāya ca |*
jagaddhitāya kṛṣṇāya govindāya namo namaḥ||

Meaning:

namaḥ - Salutation; *brahmaṇya-devāya* – to the Supreme Being; *go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca* – benevolent to the cows and Brahmins; *jagat-hitāya* – one who nourishes the whole universe; *kṛṣṇāya govindāya namaḥ namaḥ* - salutations to such Krishna, also known as Govinda.

[The word *go* has several meanings in the Vedic text. The most prominent meanings are ‘cow’, ‘Vedas’ and ‘earth’. All the three meanings can be taken here. The Supreme God is a protector of the meek and gentle.]

Text

* 24. गायत्री-प्रस्थान-प्रार्थना - *gāyatrī-prasthāna-prārthanā* – Prayer, taking leave of Gayatri

मं॥ उत्तमे शिखरे जाते भूम्यां पर्वतमूर्धनि ।
ब्राह्मणेभ्योऽभ्यनुज्ञाता गच्छ देवि यथासुखम् ।
स्तुतो मया वरदा वेद-माता प्रचोदयन्ती पवने द्विजाता ।
आयुः पृथिव्यां द्रविणं ब्रह्म-वर्चसं
मह्यं दत्त्वा प्रजातुं ब्रह्मलोकम् ।

maṃ|| *uttame śikhare jāte bhūmyāṃ parvatamūrdhani |*
brāhmaṇebhyo'bhyanujñātā gaccha devi yathāsukham |

(The Dravida version of *MNU* reads up to this only)

stuto mayā varadā veda-mātā pracodayantī pavane dvijātā |
āyuh pṛthivyāṃ draviṇaṃ brahma-varcasam
mahyaṃ datvā prajātuṃ brahma-lokam |

(Additional mantra in the other version of *MNU*)

Meaning:

uttame śikhare jāte – Oh goddess appearing from the highest peak; *bhūmyāṃ parvata-mūrdhani* – of the great mountain on earth; *brāhmaṇebhyaḥ abhyanujñātā* – having been taken leave of by the worshippers (after the worshippers have taken leave of you); *gaccha devi yathā sukham* – go to your abode as you wish. *stutaḥ mayā varadā veda-mātā* – I sang your praise oh mother of Vedas! *pracodayanti pavane dvijātā* – You are the director of all noble actions of people; *āyuh* - long life; *ṛthivyāṃ* - on earth; *draviṇaṃ* - wealth; *brahma-varcasam* - spiritual splendour; *mahyaṃ datvā* – having given to me; *prajātuṃ brahma-lokam* – reach your highest abode of Brahman.

Oh goddess appearing from the highest peak of the greatest mountain on earth! Go to your abode as you wish, as the worshippers have taken leave of you. Oh mother of Vedas! I have sung your praise. You are the director of all noble actions of people. Give me long life on earth, wealth and spiritual splendour and reach your highest abode of Brahman.

[Here the invocation is in the feminine form but the verb form used is 'stutaḥ' which is in masculine. This is to show that the same deity can be worship in masculine or in feminine or in a formless visualization.]

Text

25. नारायण नमस्कृतिः - *nārāyaṇa namaskṛtiḥ*

श्लो॥ नमोस्त्वनन्ताय सहस्र-मूर्तये
सहस्र-पादाक्षि-शिरोरु-बाहवे ।
सहस्र-नाम्ने पुरुषाय शाश्वते
सहस्र-कोटी-युग-धारिणे नमः ॥

ślo|| *namostvanantāya sahasra-mūrtaye*
sahasra-pādākṣi-śīroru-bāhave ।

sahasra-nāmnē puruṣāya śāśvate
sahasra-koṭi-yuga-dhāriṇe namaḥ ॥

Meaning:

namaḥ astu anantāya – Salutations to Ananta (the infinite);
sahasra-mūrtaye – manifesting in infinite forms; *sahasra-pāda-*
akṣi-śira-ūru-bāhave – having infinite feet, eyes, heads, thighs and
hands; *sahasra-nāmnē* – having infinite names; *puruṣāya śāśvate*
– the eternal indwelling self; *sahasra-koṭi-yuga-dhāriṇe namaḥ* -
existing beyond any reckoning of infinite eons of time.

[This verse is a summary of the *puruṣa sūktam* of the Rig Veda which describes the entire universe as a manifestation of the Supreme Brahman. The expressions ‘thousand heads’, ‘thousand hands’ etc., should not be literally taken as referring to a person with thousand heads etc. It is the convention in Vedic literature the expression ‘thousand’ means ‘infinite’.

When it is said that the Supreme Being manifests in infinite forms it implies that the seeker too is in that infinity only and not someone outside. Such meditations are to generate the idea of oneness in the whole creation.]

Text

26. वासुदेव प्रार्थना - *vāsudeva prārthanā* – Prayer to Vasudeva

26.1. श्लो॥ आकाशत् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् ।
सर्वदेव-नमस्कारः केशवं प्रति गच्छति ॥

ślo॥ *ākāśat patitaṃ toyam yathā gacchati sāgaram ।*
sarvadeva-namaskāraḥ keśavaṃ prati gacchati ॥

Meaning:

ākāśat patitaṃ toyam - Water (rain) falling from the sky;
yathā gacchati sāgaram – just as it is goes to the sea; *sarvadeva-*
namaskāraḥ - salutations to all god forms; *keśavaṃ prati gacchati*
– reach Kesava (one Supreme Being).

[The name Kesava, as explained in the step No.2, refers to the Supreme Reality in which the cosmic trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra manifest and represent the functions of creation, sustenance and dissolution.

This verse is another example of the spirit of tolerance and acceptance of all names and forms for the Supreme Reality. The Indian tradition is not exclusivist in nature.]

Text

26.2. श्लो॥ वासनाद्वासुदेवस्य वासितं ते जगत्त्रयम् ।
सर्वभूत-निवासोऽसि वासुदेव नमोऽस्तुते ॥

ślo11 *vāsanādvāsudevasya vāsitaṃ te jagattrayam ।*
sarvabhūta-nivāso'si vāsudeva namo'stute ॥

Meaning:

vāsudevasya te vāsanāt - By Vāsudeva's existence; *vāsitaṃ jagat trayam* – the three worlds are sustained; *sarva-bhūta-nivāsaḥ asi* – you are the indweller of all beings; *vāsudeva* – oh Vāsudeva! *namaḥ astu te* – Salutation to you.

[The name Vāsudeva has three different meanings. While referring to Krishna, it means that he is the son of Vasudeva, the Yadava king. Etymologically speaking, it refers to the Supreme Reality which is the cause for existence of all beings. It also means the Reality in which the whole universe exists.]

* 27. प्रवरान्वित नमस्कारः - *pravarānvita namaskārah* - salutation along with *pravara*

Text

27.1. चतुस्सागर-पर्यन्तं गो-ब्राह्मणेभ्यः शशुभं भवतु. आङ्गिरस-
आयास्य-गौतमस-त्र्यार्षेय प्रवरान्वित-गौतम-सगोत्रः आपस्तंब-सूत्रः
यजुश्शाखाध्यायी ----- शर्मा अहं भो अभिवादये ॥

catussāgara-paryantaṃ go-brāhmaṇebhyaḥ śsubhaṃ bhavatu. āṅgīrasa-āyāsya-gautamaśya-tryārṣeya pravārānvita-gautama-sagotraḥ āpastamba-sūtraḥ yajuśśākhādhyāyī ----- śarmā ahaṃ bho abhivādaye ॥

Meaning:

catuḥ-sāgara-paryantaṃ - In the entire region covered by the four seas; *go-brāhmaṇebhyaḥ* - to all cows and righteous persons; *śsubhaṃ bhavatu* - may good befall them. *āṅgīrasa-āyāsya-gautamaśya-tryārṣeya pravārānvita* - (I who am) from the lineage of sages; *gautama-sagotraḥ* - in the lineage of sage Gautama; *āpastamba-sūtraḥ* - follower of the Apastamba rules; *yajuḥ-śākhā-dhyāyī* - student of *Yajur-Veda* ----- *śarmā* - (mention your name here); *ahaṃ bho abhivādaye* - I salute.

[Meaning is clear.]

This is the final salutation in a formal manner mentioning our sage lineage, which is known as the *pravara*. The word *vara* means *eminent* or *chosen* and *pra* (same as *pro* in English) is a prefix. Thus the word can be translated as the *great lineage* or the *sage lineage*. Here the student is describing the family lineage, known as *gotra*. The Sanskrit word ‘*gau*’ (cognate with *cow*) has several meanings. It refers to the Vedas, apart from referring to cow, to earth etc. The root ‘*tra*’ is in the sense of protecting. The word *gotra* refers to a particular clan to protect a particular branch of Veda. Mention of *gotra* is a reminder to the student that he is from such distinguished line of sages and that he has a responsibility to know the tradition, to study the Veda and pass it on to posterity.]

27.2. आचम्य – *ācamya* – Formal sipping of water reciting the twenty-four names.

Text

श्लो॥ कायेन वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा
बुद्ध्यात्मना वा प्रकृतेः स्वभावात् ।
करोमि यद्यत्सकलं परस्मै
नारायणायेति समर्पयामि ॥

श्लो॥ *kāyena vācā manasendriyai rvā*
buddhyātmanā vā prakṛteḥ svabhāvāt ।
karomi yad-yat-sakalaṃ parasmai
nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayāmi ॥

Meaning:

kāyena – By the body; *vācā* – by speech; *manasā* – by mind; *indriyaiḥ vā* – or by sense organs; *buddhi-ātmanā vā* – or by intellect and Self; *prakṛteḥ svabhāvāt* – or by force of nature; *karomi yad-yat* – whatever I do; *sakalaṃ* - all; *parasmai nārāyaṇāya* – to the Supreme Narayana; *iti samarpayāmi* – I offer.

I offer all my activities – whatever performed by my body, mind or speech or those which are wilfully done or done due to fallible nature – to the Supreme Lord Narayana.

[Though this verse is not an integral part of *SV* it makes an important statement. We know that the Gita talks of *karma yoga*, a method of purifying our actions. In very simple terms, it can be understood as follows.

We perform various actions which are classified in the scriptures as good or bad karma. The good acts are rituals such as *pūjā*-s, *yajña*-s, or philanthropic activities of various types and austerities involving control of sensual pursuits. Such activities are said to give us a merit called *puṇyam*. Such merit gives a good after-life. It may be a better life or may be a stay in heaven depending on the quantum of *puṇyam*. Once the quantum gets exhausted, the person has to again take birth in order to experience the fruit

of various other innumerable *karma*-s performed in innumerable births.

The bad actions of a person result in sin, the fruit of which has to be experienced in the same way as the fruit of merit is experienced. Thus a person is endlessly caught in the cycle of birth and death.

How to get out of the cycle of birth and death? The *Upanishads* say that a person gets released from this cycle by the knowledge that his own self is essentially divine in nature and that he is not different from the Supreme Reality, called God. Such knowledge should not be mere theoretical knowledge but it has to be experienced by a person. This experience is possible only in the case of a pure mind, devoid of any attachment, greed, ambition, hate, lust etc, which bind a person to the body. Purity of mind can be consciously achieved by certain practices mentioned in the *Gita*. These practices are – the path of knowledge, the path of action (*karma-yoga*), the path of self-restraint, the path of meditation or the path of devotion to a personal god. These paths can jointly or severally be done, but the knowledge of self is essential for all paths.

The *karma-yoga* is a path in which the practitioner does not seek the fruit of whatever good karma he/she does. He/she performs all such actions as something enjoined by God or as part of his offering to god, or performs them as an instrument of god for the well being of others. Thus he is avoiding the fruit of karma, the *punyam*, which binds him to the birth cycle. This however, does not take away the past karmas of previous births, but at least gets rid of *punyam* in this life. However, such actions done as an offering to the Lord do certainly purify the mind of the person gradually. It is the offering of an individual good work for the collective well being.

And also, when a person offers all his actions to the lord, he is constantly aware of the actions he does. He cannot consciously

commit an evil act and offer it to the lord. He would gradually do some good acts and offer them to the lord. We offer only the best to the lord. Thus, our actions get purified as we continue to do karma yoga.

Thus, in the above verse, the sages who have designed this meditation have intelligently built in the mission statement of *karma yoga* in order to purify human activity.]

श्रीपरमेश्वरार्पणमस्तु - *sarvaṃ śrī-paramēśvara-arpaṇam-astu*

All this meditation is an offering to the Supreme Being.

Text

सन्ध्यावन्दनं समाप्तम् ॥ *sandhyāvandanam samāptam* ॥

Thus concludes the meditation on Sandhya.

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A word about introducing *SV* to the young pupil

The philosophy behind *SV* may look fairly complex even for an adult if he has missed traditional upbringing in his childhood. Even for those with traditional upbringing, the philosophical ideas may be new though the mechanical bodily movements might be familiar. It will be a tough task for the parent to introduce the ideas to the young child.

The parent, if not already acquainted with the basics of Indian philosophy, he/she is advised to have a basic idea about the concepts of Vedanta. Abundant material is available online. Talks by several popular Swami-s like Sarvapriyananda, Paramarthananda, Tattvavidananda and others can be found on the YouTube. Such background will help the parent while explaining to the child.

I would advise the parent against any ultra-orthodox implementation of procedure during *SV*. This could deter or draw the child away from it altogether. The ritualistic aspect of *SV* may be drilled in first. The young boy should feel the thrill of regulating his breath cycle, the thrill of doing *mudrā-s* before understanding the meaning and meditating on it. The young boy can also be told how he belongs to a great tradition of thinkers who examined the universe and discovered universal truths. He will be proud of that.

SV is not an exercise to purify oneself from sinful activities. Such statement is only an exhortation told for an unintelligent person. The real objective is to develop what is known as *sarvātmabhāva*, the idea of oneness of all beings. This is what is repeatedly told in the *Gita*. Regular meditation of *SV* leads to a philosophical vision which would give boldness, righteousness, mental courage, intellectual clarity and dignity in character.

It may be better to explain how scientifically the sages investigated into the idea of Supreme Reality in Vedanta, how rationally the symbol *Om* has been derived, the concept of meditation (*upāsanā*), the method of regulation of breath, performance of *mudrā*-s etc. The intimidating aspects (such as one would languish in hell if *SV* is not performed in time etc.) may be avoided.

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Annexure - I

The meaning of Om

Om is the most sacred symbol in the Vedic literature. According to a traditional verse, two sounds, *Om* and *atha*, burst forth from the mouth of the creator in the beginning of creation. Hence these are said to be highly auspicious. Several Upanishads too talk of the glory of *Om*.

It is interesting to see how the symbol has been explained in the Vedic literature. If we see the symbols which are known to us, we note that in order to denote gravity by a symbol, we have chosen the letter *g*. We have accepted *m* to represent mass, *v* to represent velocity, *r* to represent radius and so on. Concepts like mass, gravity etc., are simple in nature and we could represent them by the initial letters of those words. They are mere symbols and they do not describe mass or velocity or gravity. We do not meditate on symbols *g*, *v*, *r* etc., to understand gravity, velocity or radius. However, in the case of *Om*, it is said to be both a symbol and also the name indicative of the meaning. The spiritual seekers are advised to meditate on *Om* in order to understand the Supreme Reality.

Om is said to be a symbol representing the Supreme Reality, called Brahman in the *Upanishads*. It is also said to describe Brahman. It is most important to know what the word Brahman means. Our theology and mythology give the names such as Brahma (different from Brahman), Vishnu and Rudra who are said to be the gods responsible for creation, sustenance and resolution

of the universe. These three are visualized as gods having forms and attributes. Brahma is said to be in *Satya loka*, Vishnu is said to be in *Vaikuntha* and Rudra is said to be in *Kailasa*. But the word Brahman is different from the above three. We have other Vedic deities like Indra, Varuna, Agni etc, but all these are not Brahman. Brahman is defined as infinitely existing consciousness which is not a person but an entity. The universe is said to manifest from this consciousness and Brahman Itself is not said to be the creator.

When we have to choose a symbol for such an entity, we have to examine our own situation. Our existence has a three-fold limitation – limitation by place, limitation by time and limitation by being an object. For instance, when I am located in my home I am not in my office. This is limitation by place. I exist now but did not exist 100 years ago and will not exist 100 years later. This is limitation by time. I am X but not Y. This is limitation by being a person or object. These limitations apply to all things that exist. Brahman cannot have such limitations. It has to be infinite in nature. It should be only one without a second. It should be of the nature of intelligence but not limited intelligence as in the case of all living beings. Similarly, it should be an eternal entity existing in the past, present and future without getting negated.

Mandukya Upanishad makes a detailed discussion on *Om*. It says “whatever is seen is *Om*”, meaning that whatever was, is and will be in the universe in past, present and future is *Om*. One may question as to whether you and I are also *Om* and whether all objects around us are *Om*. The answer is ‘yes’. And how is it explained? It is explained by showing that all the names and forms conceivable in the human mind can be visualized in the symbol *Om*. Sri Shankaracharya has explained this in his commentary, which can be explained in simple terms as follows:

The sound *Om* is formed as a result of combination of three sounds *a* (as in san), *u* (as in put) and *m* (as in rom). In any

language a combination of the sounds *a* and *u* leads to the sound *o*. Thus *Om* is a combination of the above three sounds.

The most primary sound made by a human being when he merely opens his mouth and releases air from the vocal chords, is the sound *a* (pronounced as in *sun* or as in *bath*). That is the primary cry of a child too. The end of all sounds is when the person closes the lips and still makes a humming sound with his nose and that sound is 'm' (as in *room*). The transition between 'a' and 'm' is achieved by slowly closing the mouth while at the same time releasing air and this produces the sound 'u' (as in *put* or in *pool*). All human expressions start with opening of mouth and closing it. All words which we utter are modifications within the 'a – u – m'. All the verbal activity of human beings in all languages is contained in this. In other words, all the names and sounds associated with them can be represented by 'Om', which has been a symbol to denote all sounds for all describable things.

Names denote objects. When all sounds or names are denoted by *Om*, it follows that all external objects in the universe are represented by *Om*.

Vedanta makes a similar observation about the forms (*rūpa*) of objects. When we say the word 'pen', the image of a pen appears in the mind. It is an experience in mind. If I eat an ice-cream, it is an experience in the mind, when I smell a perfume it is an experience in the mind. All the objects exist in the mind as experiences. In other words, all forms are appearances in Atman, the self.

Vedantins analyze the objects from the cause-effect point of view. When you take a pot, it is only a modification of clay. When the pot is destroyed, what remains is clay and as the *Upanishads* say the name is only for name-sake, but the truth is clay (*vācāraṃbhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam*). Clay itself is a modification (*pariṇāma*) in *māyā*, which is the manifesting power of consciousness. With

respect to consciousness, clay is merely an appearance. Thus all forms are but modifications with respect to *māyā* and appearances (*vivarta*) with respect to consciousness. Objects may differ from one another. A pot is not a cloth and vice versa but behind all objects, the principle of existence is common. Thus the vedantins conclude that all forms are appearances in consciousness (*caitanya*) and all sensory experiences of such forms / objects are appearances in consciousness.

Thus we see that all names and sounds can be taken as modifications of ‘*Om*’ and all forms can be taken as appearances in consciousness. The name and form of an object are inseparably linked. In Vedantic terms ‘*abhidheya*’, the object (form) is not something different from ‘*abhidhāna*’, the name. Hence for the purpose of meditation, the word ‘*Om*’ is equated with Atman, which is another name for consciousness. The practitioner has to meditate on ‘*Om*’ as comprising of all conceivable objects and slowly deny the content of the same and concentrate on the *caitanya* (consciousness) which ‘*Om*’ symbolizes. The practitioner gradually becomes stabilized in such consciousness. He meditates on the only one Reality which is behind all names, forms and their experiences.

The *Mandukya Upanishad* also adds – ‘past, present and future, all is *Om*’. It means that all human experience of names and forms at all times is contained in the one and only consciousness, that is, Brahman. This is explained in the *Vedanta Pancadasi* by sage Vidyanaraya in the very opening verses of his book. All human experience is at three levels – waking, dream and deep sleep. The mind and sense organs are active in the waking state and perceive all sense objects. In the dream state the sense organs are withdrawn but the mind is active, creating a world of its own. Thus, we notice the presence of intelligence during waking and dream states but we are not conscious of the same during the deep sleep. After we

wake up we become aware of its presence even in the deep sleep state. Thus consciousness is present in all three states and beyond. This continues for days, years and ages till eternity. Hence, for the purpose of meditation, the word 'Om' is used to cover all the three states of experience and also to indicate the consciousness beyond the three states. It is done as follows.

The sound 'a' represents the waking state, *jāgrad avasthā*, 'u' represents the dream state, *swapna avasthā* and 'm' represents the deep sleep state, *suṣupti avasthā*. As we noted above, the mind is active in the dream state and creates an internal universe of its own. In deep sleep, however, the mind is withdrawn from external or internal world. It is in a state of ignorance. But these three states are mere delimiting factors or different phases in consciousness, whereas consciousness itself is beyond the three stages and is known as '*turiya*'. This word literally means a fourth stage but it is not really a fourth stage but a stage in which all the three other stages merge. Thus the meditation on 'Om' is done as the consciousness present in all the three stages and also beyond the three stages. The practitioner meditates that there is only one reality in all states of existence. Thus, all human experience can be represented by *Om*.

Meditation on 'Om' involves a continuous chanting of the sound and each component in the sound ('a', 'u' and 'm') merges into the other, resulting in a continuous humming voice. This is compared to the continuous ringing of a gong in temples where the ringing of the bell is merging into the continuous chiming sound. This is to discard all other sounds and concentrate on the continuous chiming sound. This represents the pure consciousness on which the practitioner is asked to meditate.

The Gayatri mantra mentions seven *loka*-s – *bhūh*, *bhuvah* and so on. The sequence mentions the *loka*-s in increasing degree of importance. The *satya loka* is the closest to Supreme Brahman. We have to remind ourselves that Sri Shankara points out that all

these *loka*-s are not some three dimensional places in the space but they are our own states of happy, nobler and exalted experience. When we utter the Gayatri mantra, we say ‘*Om bhūḥ, Om bhuvah*’ etc, reminding ourselves that all these *loka*-s are contained in ‘*Om*’. In other words, ‘*Om*’ is the Supreme Consciousness representing all these exalted states of experience.

The *Kathopanishad* says that this is the most commended ‘*ālambanam*’, a support, in order to *know* either the Supreme Brahman or *attain* any desired God like Vishnu, Shiva, etc, with a form and attributes. The *Upanishad* says that you may stop at whatever stage you want. You may stop at a lower level, the level of *saguna* worship or you can go up to the end of the journey and reach the thought-free state.

The *saguna* mode is the mode of duality where the worshipper thinks he is different from the deity and seeks the blessings of the deity. He worships God saying ‘*Om namaśśivāya*’ ‘*Om namo nārāyanāya*’ and so on and equates the symbol ‘*Om*’ with the particular God.

The *nirguna* mode is the mode of non-duality where the objective of the petitioner is to negate his ego (mind) or, in other words, dissolve his limited wave-consciousness in the ocean of consciousness. We may note that mind is used as a tool for meditation and finally the mind itself is resolved. Hence the saying – *yena tyajasi tat tyaja* (*Samnyasa Upanishad*) – ‘discard that (the mind) by which you have discarded the world’.

At this level, the practitioner negates all the names and forms. *Whatever is name is not a name but consciousness. Whatever is a form (rūpa), is not a form, but consciousness. This negation of nama-rūpa enables the practitioner to dissolve the whole jagat in Omkāra.* Hence the *Upanishadic* saying – ‘*sarvam Omkāra eva*’- ‘everything is *Om* only’.

Om is used in a more practical context during the *yajña*-s, as we see in the Gita (17:24). Krishna says how when the *mantra*-s are recited by the scholars of the concerned *Veda*, the main priest says ‘*Om*’, which is a sign of approval. It is meant to mean – ‘so be it’, ‘it has the approval of the Supreme’. The *mantra*-s commence with *Om* and their approval at the end is also by *Om*.

Om is a sacred symbol for all the Indic religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. We may also see the similarity of *Om* with the holy word of Christians and Muslims – ‘*amen*’, which also means ‘so be it’, in a tone of approval, a curious coincidence one can note.

Meditation is an important spiritual practice in all Indian religious traditions for achieving concentration of mind. Such concentration can either be in the form of a stream of similar thoughts or in the form of an idea or symbol, or, in total contrast, as in the Patanjali system, keeping the mind free from all thoughts. In Vedanta, meditation is a preparatory stage of attaining purity of mind to enable the mind to receive the knowledge of the Supreme.

The Vedic tradition has prescribed the symbol ‘*Om*’ for meditating on the Brahman at the absolute level (*nirguṇa Brahman*) or on a God at functional level (*saguṇa Brahma*). *Mandukya Upanishad* has attached great significance to this symbol and we see the same in *Brihadaranyaka*, *Katha* and other *Upanishads*.

Suggested Listening:

1. Talk by Swami Tattvavidananda on *Om* in *Mandukya Upanishad*
2. Talk by Swami Vidadatmananda on *Om* in www.avgsatsang.org
3. Talk by Swami Sarvapriyananda on *Om* in the YouTube

Annexure – II

An Understanding of *upāsanā-s* in the *Upanishads* –

The sages of ancient India observed the universe and contemplated on it at a macro level. They examined the universe, the constellations, the movements of planets, behavior of not only humans but also of all animals and tried to intuitively understand the basic principles and speculate on the nature of reality. They experienced a vision, which can be succinctly described as *sarvātma-bhāva* – the idea that the Supreme Reality, which they called Brahman, is the only entity which is pervading or manifesting as the universe. Brahman is infinite in nature and hence by definition the universe cannot be different from Brahman and more importantly, you and I cannot be different from Brahman. However, this is not our normal experience. We have our individual identities, big and mighty and hence cannot accept the above idea unless specially trained to realize it. The effort made for such realization is *upāsanam*, also called as *upāsanā* or *sāadhanā* or *vidyā* in the Upanishads.

Upāsanam is not something esoteric or mystical. It is purely a process of thinking and proper understanding. Sri Shankaracharya, in his introductory commentary on the *Chandogya Upanishad* notes how it is a process of clear thinking on the nature of Reality.

Vedas are usually compared to a mega mall where everyone can get whatever he wants. A person desiring worldly pleasures can get them by performing some prescribed ritual; a person who

wishes to worship a chosen deity and lead a pious life can do so and the person who seeks enlightenment and philosophical guidance can also get it from them. The *karma-kāṇḍa* of Vedas provides for the desires of man. The sages took into account the realities of human nature and provided for such pleasures. But they also seem to have had a conscious plan to harmonize the ethical and religious life of individual with the quest for reality, which is the final goal. Thus we see that there is a gradation in the Vedic texts. Vedas prescribe certain *karma*-s and prohibit some others in order to make an undisciplined person into a disciplined person. This is not enough because a person does *karma* seeking the fruit of it. This does not elevate or ennoble him. Hence the texts tell about *karma-yoga*, the desire-free action which leads to purity of mind and expansion of self. Mere purity of mind is also not enough. It needs concentration and focus to think on the nature of Brahman. Hence *upāsana*-s are told in order to wean away the human being from the level of *karma-yoga* and take him to a higher level. We see this in the *upāsana kāṇḍa* of the Vedas. The next higher level is pure philosophical enquiry, called *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, leading to realization of Brahman. Thus, in brief,

Karma- kāṇḍa – deals with rituals leading to fulfillment of worldly desires,

Upāsana-kāṇḍa – deals with meditations on certain divine forms, and

Jñāna-kāṇḍa – deals with enquiry into the nature of Supreme Reality.

Upāsana is a step above the ritualistic *karma* and a step below the knowledge of self. It is thus an intermediate stage between ritual and knowledge. However, the human being is quite comfortable with ritual because of the attraction of the results and also because it is an easier option. Weaning him away from ritual is a big task. Sri Shankaracharya notes how the sages integrated the meditations as

part of rituals with the expectation that the worshipper, at some point of time, would realize the higher purpose and slowly get weaned away from the rituals (*Gita Bhashyam* 2-11).

What is the mechanism of *upāsanā*? Sri Shankara explains it as a meditation on a symbol which represents the deity being worshipped. For instance, a person may have a picture or an idol of the deity and he may be contemplating on the nature of that deity seeking some result. The meditation should be a continuous flow of similar thoughts, undisturbed by dissimilar thoughts. It should be a continuous stream, like the thin thread of viscous oil poured from the tip of a beaker (Commentary on *Taittiriya Upanishad* 1-3).

What is the uniqueness of *upāsanā*? We are aware of several *upāsanā*-s on deities of our choice. Some are in the form of a petitioner seeking a favour from the deity. It is in the mode of duality. The meditations suggested in Upanishads are of a different type. They are not desire-oriented *upāsanā*-s but they are planned and structured in such a way that the practitioner is led to observe his position in the universe and see the unity in the universe. For instance, when he meditates on the body-mind-complex, he sees it not as an independent entity but as part of the cosmic gross body, *virāt*. When he moves on to the more subtle level, the vital airs, he sees it as part of the cosmic subtle body, known as Hiranagarbha. His notion of self expands, so to say and he discovers that he is part of the whole and not different from the whole. The microcosm is not different from the macrocosm. Thus slowly, the meditation changes the perspective of the individual about understanding of his own self. It helps the seeker to redefine his identity. We normally define our identity in terms of religion, caste, sex or social and economic status. Vedanta changes this identity.

Upanishads make statements such as “You are Brahman”, “I am Brahman”, “All this is Brahman” etc. These sentences are

called grand statements, *mahā-vākya*-s, because they tell about the oneness of the individual and the Brahman Itself. Note the expression ‘Brahman Itself’. The word Brahman denotes the Supreme Reality which is of the nature of infinitely existing consciousness. It is not either in masculine or in feminine. Hence the pronoun used is ‘It’ while referring to Brahman.

A new comer is bound to be shocked if the above grand statements are directly told to him. He cannot accept when the scripture says – “you are Brahman”. “Human kind cannot bear too much of reality” as T.S.Eliot, the American poet, says. Hence the sages used *upāsanā*-s as a preparatory step before telling him that he is the Brahman.

Upāsanā-s are generally seen in three types – meditating on a symbol which represents a deity, chanting a philosophical passage as part of a ritual and meditating on the unity with the Supreme Reality. The first one is an *upāsanam* in the mode of duality. It is a meditation on a symbol which represents the chosen deity. All our daily worship is with the help of idols of deities only. We superimpose the idea of Vishnu on a *sālagrāma*, which is a mere shell. We know that it is not really Vishnu, but we do a superimposition which is accepted by scripture. The second type, noted above, is associated with *karma*, a Vedic ritual. A philosophical message is embedded in the *karma* but the objective is to gradually enlighten the worshipper, as Sri Shankara noted above. The third type, the meditation on oneness with the deity or with the Supreme Reality, is not associated with *karma* but it is a direct contemplation and meditation on the nature of the self. It is to contemplate on the oneness with the Supreme. Examples of this are *gāyatrī-vidyā*, *śāṅḍilya-vidyā*, *akṣi-puruṣa-vidyā* etc., which are in the *Upanishads*. These are for an advanced student, meant to expand the idea of self as we discussed above.

We may see a couple of examples. We have the meditation on *bhūh bhuvah* and *svah* in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (1:5,6). The *Upanishad* says – *bhūrity-agnau pratitiṣṭhati, bhuva iti vāyau, suvarity-āditye, maha iti brahmaṇi* (1:6). It means that the seeker, while visualizing *bhūh*, expands his self to encompass the whole earth. While meditating on *bhuvah* he identifies with the intermediate space too. He further meditates on *svah* and identifies with the heavenly worlds, represented by Aditya. He finally achieves identification with Hiranyagarbha. This is a meditation in which the seeker gradually moves beyond his limited body-mind-complex and goes on with progressive identification with higher and higher realms and finally realizes that he is an integral part of the universe. He also learns that his body-mind-complex, the microcosm is the same as the cosmic being Hiranyagarbha, which is the macrocosm. This is a meditation which helps in attaining the *sarvātma-bhāva* – a vision of oneness in all. The seeker sees everyone as his own self. This is a meditation which most of us unknowingly do every day during the *Sandhya Vandanam*.

Upanishads say that the symbol ‘*Om*’ is the most commended ‘*ālambanam*’, a support, in order to know either the Supreme Brahman or *attain* any desired God form. The *Upanishad* says that you may stop at whatever stage you want. You may stop at a lower level, the level of a deity with form and name (*saguna*) or you can go up to the end of the journey and reach the thought-free state. (A detailed note on the symbol *Om* may be seen in the annexure I).

The *saguna* mode is the mode of duality where the worshipper thinks he is different from the deity and seeks the blessings of the deity. He worships God saying ‘*Om namaḥśivāya*’ ‘*Om namo nārāyaṇāya*’ and so on and equates the symbol ‘*Om*’ with the particular God.

The formless (*nirguna*) mode is the mode of non-duality where the objective of the petitioner is to negate his individual ego

or, in other words, dissolve his individuated wave-consciousness in the ocean of consciousness. At this level, the practitioner negates all the names and forms. Whatever is name is not a name but consciousness. Whatever is a form is not a form, but consciousness. This negation of name and form enables the practitioner to dissolve the whole universe in the symbol *Om*.

We have *upāsana*-s in our daily life too. The *sandhyā-vandanam* is a good example. Three times a day, the seeker does *nyāsam* of *Gāyatrī mantra* on his self. Here the *mantra*-s are quite interesting. The student says – *tat-savitur̥ brahmātmane hṛdayāya namaḥ, varenyam̐ viṣṇavātmane śīrase svāhā*, --- and goes on to say – ‘*dhīmahi satyātmane kavacāya hum, dhiyo yo naḥ jñānātmane netra-trayāya vauṣaṭ, sarvātmane astrāya phaṭ*’. Here we see that he is referring to the Supreme Brahman which is defined as *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam* in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. The student is initially talking at the level of creation, sustenance and resolution by the words Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra but does not stop here. He goes beyond to talk of the existence, consciousness and infinitude, which is Brahman. He goes beyond his narrow body-mind-complex and identifies with a higher self in which all duality ceases.

Another example is our daily meals. This is in fact a simplified version of *prāṇa-upāsana* seen in the Upanishads (*Prasna* or *Chandogya*). In this *upāsana* the seeker identifies his self with the *prāṇa*. Thus we come to visualize the mundane process of meals as a sacred meditation, a *yajña*. We visualize that we are offering oblations to the *vaiśvānara-agni* inside us. The food we take is the *soma* and fire inside is *vaiśvānara-agni* and thus the whole process is visualized as the *agniṣṭhoma yāga*. We offer small morsels of food saying *prāṇāya svāhā, apānāya svāhā* etc., referring to the five vital airs in our body. By doing so, the practitioner will gradually come to treat eating not as a gluttonous activity but as a sacred activity of maintaining the *vaiśvānara*.

Yet another example of meditation embedded in the ritual is the daily worship with *puruṣa-sūktam*, *uttara-nārāyaṇam* or *rudra-adhyāyam*. These are philosophical passages, from the *Vedas* and from the *Mahā-nārāyaṇopaniṣad*. The sages have visualized our *pūjā* in such a way that the revelation of its meaning depends on the maturity of the performer. An ignorant person glosses over the philosophical implication, but a mature person observes lines such as – “*sa brahma sa śivaḥ sa hariḥ se'ndraḥ so'kṣaraḥ paramaḥ svarāṭ*”. Again, he finds another line *tvaṃ yajñāḥ tvaṃ viṣṇuḥ tvaṃ rudrastvaṃ prajāpatiḥ* at the end. He realizes that the Supreme is in fact dwelling in his own heart.

Now we can see as to how all this impacts our outlook.

A natural corollary of this vision of unity is unconditional love for all. Normally we love others because we love ourselves, as sage Yajnavalkya says in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. This is at the plane of duality. Religions talk of compassion and kindness, but that is also based on the notion of duality – doing some service for others and deriving some satisfaction that we have done some good. Here it is not so, it is a change in the vision itself. The person with this vision has gone beyond duality; he sees oneness in all and hence loves all beings as he loves himself, without any motive for gain.

Another fallout of this vision is the disappearance or dropping away of desires. The person, who seeks the self (*ātma-kāma*), becomes one who has attained all desires (*āpta-kāma*). He sees nothing external to himself and hence he has nothing to seek. His happiness is superior to the happiness of gods, *gandharvas* and all such heavenly beings. His bliss is superior when compared to the happiness of all others, as the *Taittiriya Upanishad* says.

Transcendence from duality leads to transcendence from fear or desire to defend oneself. Fear is due to the perception of duality

– *dvitiyād vai bhayaṃ bhavati* – as the *Upanishad* says. All nations survive on the basic principle of defending themselves from the enemy. Quite often they see the enemy and thus create the enemy. This may be needed as a matter of national policy but not for a seeker. He has ceased to exist as an entity apart from the infinite Brahman. The non-dual vision takes away from the compulsions of fear and self-defence – *na tato vijugupsate*, as the *Upanishad* says.

An important outcome of the above vision is our tradition of tolerance. The tradition of religious tolerance is built into our blood because of the non-dual vision. Religions world over visualize a God with functions such as creation, sustenance, rewarding the believers and punishing the non-believers. Indian religions do not say that god punishes the non-believers. They accept all other religions as valid as they would answer the prayers of the believers. We may proudly say that the Vedic tradition is only tradition which accepts all forms and has no dispute with any tradition. Human values and relationships grow into an enlightened level with this vision of oneness.

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Annexure – III

The twenty four *mudra*-s mentioned in 16.3 are shown below in two sheets. The names are mentioned in Telugu but the student may please see the numbers and match accordingly. Information is taken from an online open source.

1) सुमुखम्



2) संपुटम्



3) विततम्



4) विस्तृतम्



5) द्विमुखम्



6) त्रिमुखम्



7) चतुर्मुखम्



8) पंचमुखम्



9) षण्मुखम्



10) अधोमुखम्



11) व्यापकाञ्जलिम्



12) शक्तम्



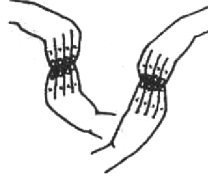
13) यमपाशम्



14) ग्रथितम्



15) सम्मुखोन्मुखम्



15) प्रलंबम्



17) मुष्टिकम्



18) मत्स्यः



19) कूर्मः



20) वराहकम्



20) सिंहाक्रांतम्



22) महाक्रांतम्



23) मुद्गरम्



24) पल्लवम्



The eight *mudra*-s mentioned in 18.4 are shown below.



1) सुरभिः



2) ज्ञानम्



3) चक्रम्



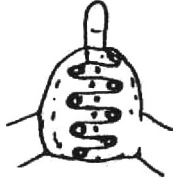
4) योनिः



5) कूर्मः



6) पंकजम्



7) लिंगम्



8) निर्याणम् (निर्वाणम्)

Annexure – IV

Source Books:

1. *Taittiriya Aranyakam* Volumes I & II published by Anandashrama, Pune, 2008
2. *Taittiriya Sandhya-bhashyam* by Sri Krishna Pandita, published by Vavilla Ramaswami Sastrulu & Sons, Chennai, 1959
(It is a detailed Sanskrit commentary on the *Yajur-Veda SV*, but printed in Telugu script. It is a very erudite commentary, explaining the philosophical significance of the *mantra-s*)
3. *Krishna-Yajurvediya-Sandhya-Vandanam-sa-bhashyam* by Vedanti Sitarama Sastri, published by Sri Balamanorama Press, Mylapore, Chennai, 1931.
(It is a detailed commentary in Sanskrit with an emphasis on the philosophical aspect of the *SV* meditation. This writer has largely commented on the same lines as Srikrishna Pandita).
4. *Devi Bhagavatam*, Skanda 12
5. *Maha Narayanopanishad*, which forms a part of the *Taittiriya Aranyakam* (S.No.1 above), contains many of the *mantra-s* of *SV*.

