

Sandhya Mantras



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What is Sandhya?

The Veda Samhitas has been the foundation for all aspects of Hindu or Indian Culture since ancient days. These books are vast—Rigveda Samhita alone has about ten thousand verses. Thus persons who read them entirely everyday are necessarily small in number. Thus even from ancient days, at least three thousand years ago, a small subset of the Veda mantras were chosen by our savants so that they could be recited at least once a day by all persons. Later on all these mantras were embedded in a ritual so that the attention of the worshippers could become more focused and not wander when reciting the mantras. The mantras and the associated ritual came to be labeled as *Sandhya* Worship. *Sandhi* means a junction, typically the conjunction of night and day. Thus the recitation should be done thrice daily in the morning dawn before sunrise, at noon and in the evening twilight.

The core part of the worship is the repetition or *japa* and meditation on the Light of the supernal Sun, Savitr or on the Goddess Savitri using the famous mantra popularly known as Gayatri occurring originally in Rigveda Samhita, third mandala, sukta 62 and verse 10, i.e., RV (3.62.10) revealed to the sage Vishwamitra.

The details of the Sandhya worship vary from community to community and also on the Veda to which the doer belongs. We give below the mantras commonly used by most persons. The basic program has four steps. Persons who do not find time to do all the steps can try to perform the step 3, namely the repetition of the Gayatri mantra.

Four steps of the Sandhya worship:

Purification of the mind and body

Invocation of the God Savitr or the Goddess Gayatri

The main mantra of the Gayatri and its repetition or japa

Conclusion of contemplation

Om chanting: In some books, the repetition of the pranava or Om mantra is part of sandhya worship and it is done after the third step above.

Additional mantras: Sandhya should be done three times. Some additional mantras are recited specific to the worships in these times



Sandhya Mantras

- (1) Morning Prayer to the Spiritual Sun
- (2) Mid-day Prayer for longevity
- (3) Evening Prayer
- (4) Initial Prayer for all times





Purification of the Mind and Body

Swami Vivekananda and all great teachers have said that purification of mind is more important than that of body. Purification of the mind is achieved with good thoughts with benevolence to all. Only the energies from the Divine termed as Divine waters or *apah* have the capacity of purifying us. Obviously *apah* in the Veda is not physical water. Ritualists sprinkle themselves with water while reciting these mantras.

Worship begins with a brief prayer

अच्युताय नमः ।

अनन्ताय नमः ।

गोविन्दाय नमः ।

achutaya namah.

anantaya namah.

govindaya namah.

Salutation to the Indestructible, Salutation to the Infinite, Salutation of the manifestor of knowledge in all. [*go* means knowledge]

There are four verses in this step.

Three mantras from the Rig Veda Samhita (10.9.1) through (10.9.3) are used, addressed to the Divine Energies or Waters.

The fourth one is from the Shukla Yajur Veda (23.32), also in Krishna Yajur Veda. It is addressed to the Divine Horse, symbol of the divine Pranic Energy.

Purification mantras

Verse 1:

आपो हि ष्ठा मयो भुवः । ता न ऊर्जे दधातन । महे रणाय चक्षसे ।



apo hi shtha mayo bhuvah ta na uurje dadhatana mahe ranaya chakshase.

RV (10.9.1)

O Waters, you are the source of all happiness; Bestow on us the great strength, So that we may have the vision of the supreme.

Explanation:

It is not possible for us to have the vision of the Supreme till all of our bodies, physical and subtle are ready. RV (9.83.1) tells us that a body which is not prepared by the practice of tapas will break down at the onset of certain spiritual experience. Hence the rishi prays to the currents of power, *apah*, to strengthen all our bodies so that these subtle bodies can sustain the forces which enter the body. Then we could have the vision of the Supreme Divine.

Verse 2:

यो वः शिवतमो रसः । तस्य भजयतेह नः । उशतीरिव मातरः ।

yo vah shivatamo rasah, tasya bhajayateha nah ushatiriva matarah.

RV (10.9.2)

In that auspicious joy of yours, Make us participate in this very life, Like fond mothers (nourishing their children).

Verse 3

तस्मा अरं गमाम वः । वस्य क्षयाय जिन्वथ । आपो जनयथा च नः ।

tasma aram gamama vah yasya ks

hayaya jinvatha apo janayatha cha nah.

RV (10.9.3)

May we attain to that satisfactory state of consciousness, Which you are pleased to grant us. Endow on us the divine energies.



Additional Verse for purification:

दधिक्राव्णो अकारिषम् । जिष्णोस्वस्य वाजिनः ।
सुरभि नो मुखाकरत् । प्रण आयूँषि तारिषत् ।

dadhikravanno akarisham jishnorashvasya vajinah,

surabhi no mukhakarata prana ayumshi tarishat.

I make obeisance to the Supreme Person who supports, rules and sustains all the worlds, who is ever victorious and who symbolises the Divine Pranic energy in the form of a horse (*hayagriva*). May He make us fragrant with knowledge. May He protect our lives continuously.

ref: RV (4.39.6) and Shukla Yajur Veda (23.32), Krishna Yajurveda (1.5.11) & (7.4.19).





Invoking the Supreme Savitr or Savitri

Nature of Savitri

Savitri is the Sun. Not the physical sun in our skies, but the Sun of Truth on the spiritual firmament. Savitri is the Creator of All (the root *su* meaning: to give birth, loose forth, impel etc.). He is the Supreme Divine in His poise for manifestation and He releases and impels all forms into existence (The pronoun he is used for Savitri for simplicity). He is the Spiritual Sun on the highest summit of Creation, extended like an Eye RV (1.22.20) in the Heaven and it is He who is imaged by the solar orb on the physical plane of our universe. He is the Truth-Sun, the sole source of all Light and Life who is the Goal of the life-long Sacrifice and the object of the perpetual vision RV (1.22.20) of the Seers of the Veda. He is the supreme Purusha, the Brahman self-formulated as the Creative Person at the head of the Manifestation of which we are a part.

He creates. But in creating, He Himself enters and assumes the innumerable forms that people the vast system of universes. His forms are thus multitudinous. But there is a Form which is the highest Form of all forms, and that is the most natural and the best Form of Savitri: Light. Light is the vesture of Truth. The first and the characteristic form of Spiritual Truth is always Light and even our physical light which is a symbol of the spiritual Light, holds something of that Truth at its core. And being the natural form it is also the most enhancing-holding in itself the full content of the felicities of Truth, *prajavat saubhagam*, fruitful felicity RV (5.82.4).

But this Lustre is not sizable by our gross sight. It is only the inner Eye opened by Yoga, after an adequate purification and enlightenment of the being, that can perceive it. Perceive where? Within the heart. The Supreme Light which shines in the Heaven is the same Light within man (Chhandogya Upanishad. 3.26)

In course of time, Savitr or Savitri the Divine Sun was closely associated with the Goddess Gayatri, the mother of all meters and the primeval sound and the Goddess Saraswati, the Goddess of Divine Inspiration and knowledge. Hence we invoke Savitri, Gayatri and Saraswati together.

There are three verses. The first two invoke the three goddesses. The last one identifies the rishi and deity of the famous Gayatri mantra to be recited.

Mantras for invoking Savitri

verse1



आयातु वरदा देवी अक्षरं ब्रह्मसंमितम् ।
गायत्री छन्तसां मातेदं ब्रह्म जुषस्व नः ॥

ayatu varada devi aksharam brahmasammitam.

gayatri chhandasam matedam brahma jushasva nah.

To (instruct) the imperishable Brahman revealed by Veda (to us)

May the boon-conferring Divine Gayatri come to us.

May Gayatri, the mother of metres, favour us with the Supreme (mentioned before).

[TA (10.26.1); Mah. U. (15.1)]

verse 2

ओजोऽसि सहोऽसि बलमसि भ्राजोऽसि
देवानां धामनामासि विश्वमसि विश्वायुः सर्वमसि सर्वायुरभिभूरू
ओं गायत्रीमावाहयामि सावित्रीमावाहयामि सरस्वतीमावाहयामि ।

ojo asi saho asi balamasi bhrajo asi

*devanam dhamanamasi vishvamasi vishvayuh sarvamasi
sarvayurabhibhuur,*

om gayatrim avahayami savitrim avahayami sarasvatim avahayami

Thou art the essence of strength, Thou art patience, Thou art physical capacity,

Thou art splendour,

Thou art the abode of Gods and their names. Thou art the universe, Thou art the full span of life or Lord of all;



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Thou art every being, Thou art the life span of all and vanquisher of all hostiles.
Thou art the Pranava om.

I invoke Gayatri (in my heart), I invoke Savitri; I invoke Sarasvati.

[KYV (2.4.3.1); TA (10.26.1), Mah. U. (15.1)]

verse 3:

सावित्र्या ऋषिः विश्वामित्रः । निचृद्गायत्री छन्दः । सविता देवता ।

savitrya rshih vishvamisrah, nichrd gayatri chhandah savita devata.

Identifying rishi and chhandas of gayatri mantra

For the *gayatri* mantra, the rishi is Vishvamitra chhandas nichrdgayatri and the deity Savita.





The Japa of the Gayatri Mantra

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ।

om bhurbhuvah svah tat saviturvarenyam bhargo devasya dhiimahi, dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.

Translation:

Om, we become aware of the three planes in us.

On the excellent splendour

Of the adorable deva savitr, we meditate;

May He activate our thoughts towards wisdom.

Explanation:

The first line in the mantra has the three words *bhuh*, *bhuvah* and *svah* standing respectively for the three worlds or planes of consciousness in each one of us. The three planes are the plane of physical matter *bhuh*, the plane of life-energies or *prana* called *bhuvah* and the plane of mental energies and the higher spiritual intelligence called *sva* or *svah*. We should become conscious or aware of the three planes in us at first.

The next three lines beginning with *tat savitur* is addressed to the deva *savitr*, the spiritual sun.

The Sun, Savitr, is not the physical sun we see in the skies, but the supreme Effulgence in the highest firmament above, beyond the lower triple creation. The physical sun is indeed taken as the image of the Truth-Sun, the Centre of all Knowledge and radiating Power. It is the radiance issuing from the Supreme Source in which is massed all the creative movement of the Uncreate that is the ultimate root of all movements in the creation. Let that Light motivate and energise our thought-movements, says the Rishi.

In the Vedic times, the worship of murthies or idols seem to be absent. In the later times. Savitr was represented as a Goddess, sometimes with one face, sometimes with six faces sitting on a lotus or standing on the waters, the standard symbol of Divine energies. One pair of her hands have conch *shankha* and the wheel chakra symbolising the creation by the Word. The second pair carries the mace and the axe representing her forces to battle the demons. In



another pair, she carries the bowl of madhu, the wine of Delight, *ananda*, the secret of creation. Another pair display her benediction to all her devotees.

The importance of the mantra is discussed in some detail in the Brihadaraanyka Upanishad (5.14) and (6.3.6).

Variants of the Main Mantra:

Some persons belonging to the Krishna Yajur Veda replace the word *svah* by *suvah*.

Hence the first line reads: *om bhurbhuvassuvah*.

In some booklets, the word *varenyam* is replaced by *vareniyam*, with the reason that by making this modification, the mantra *tat savitur* will have exactly 24 symbols. But the Rig Veda Samhita states that the metre is *nichrit gayatri*, i.e. the number of syllables is less than 24. But all the elaborate error correcting methods of chanting of Rig Veda (3.62.10), called *ashta vikratas* declare that the correct word is *varenyam*.

Source:

The original text of the three lines beginning with *tat savitur* is from the Rig Veda Samhita RV (3.62.10), third manala, 62nd Sukta and tenth verse. It is also in Sama Veda 1462, Shukla Yajur Veda Samhita (3.35), (22.9), (30.2), and (36.3), Krishna Yajur Veda Samhita or Taittiriya Samhita (1.5.6.4), (4.1.11.1). All the 4 lines beginning with *bhurbhuvah* is in Shukla YV 36.3 and Krishna YV (4.1.11.1).

The main mantra (extended gayatri)

ओं भूः । ओं भुवः । ओ॒सुवः ओं महः ।
ओं जनः । ओं तपः । ओ॒सुत्यम् ।
ओं तत्स॑वि॒तुर्व॑रि॒ण्यं॑ भ॒र्गो दे॒वस्य॑ धीमहि ।
धियो॒ यो नः॑ प्र॒चोद॑यात् ।
ओमापो॒ ज्योती॑ रसोऽमृत॒ ब्रह्म॑ भूर्भुवः॒ सुव॑रोम् ॥



om bhuh. om bhuvah. om suvah.

om mahah. om janah, om tapah, om satyam.

om tatsavitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi,

dhiyo yo nah prachodayat,

om apo jyoti raso amrtam brahma bhurbhuvah suvarom.

Translation

Om Earth, Om mid-world, Om Heaven

Om the realm of wisdom, Om happiness world,

Om the world of askesis, Om abode of Truth.

Om may we meditate on the Adorable Light of that Divine

Generator who energises our consciousness.

Om He is water, light, flavour, ambrosia and also the three worlds.

He who is denoted by *pranava* is all these.





Conclusion of the Contemplation

This step is called as *upasthana*.

It begins with a mantra for the Supreme Person whose physical symbol is the solar orb. There are three different prayers, for the morning, noon and evening worship respectively. The meanings are very interesting and these mantras are widely used.

Prayer for the SUN the soul of all that moves and moves not (morning worship)

Morning Prayer to the Spiritual Sun

मित्रस्य चर्षणी धृतः श्रवो देवस्य सानसिम् । सत्यं चित्रश्रवस्तमम् ॥

*mitrasya charshani dhrtah shravo devasya sanasim satyam
chitrashravastamam*

[RV (3.59.6); KYV (3.4.11.5); (4.1.6.3); SYV (11.62)]

I meditate on the glory and fame of the all-protecting Sun who is adorable, eternal, bewitching the hearts of all listeners.

मित्रो जनान् यातयति प्रजानन् मित्रो दाधार पृथिवीमुतद्याम् ।

मित्रः कृष्टीरनिमिषाभिचष्टे सत्याय हव्यं घृतवद्विधेम ॥

mitrojanan yatayati prajanan mitrodadhara prthivim utadyam,

*mitrah krshtir animishabhi chashte satyaya [mitraya] havyam ghrtavad
vidhema.*

[RV (3.59.1) with some word replacements KYV (3.4.11.5)]

The Sun guides all, knowing everything. He supports the earth and the sky. He watches all creation unwinkingly. To him we offer hymns endowed with clarity (or rice with ghee, for ritualists) for attaining eternal fruits.



प्र स मित्र मर्तो अस्तु प्रयस्वान् यस्त आदित्य शिक्षति व्रतेन ।
न हन्यते न जीयते त्वोतो नेनमँहो अश्रोत्वन्तितो न दूरात् ॥

*pra sa mitra marto astu prayasvan yasta aditya shikshati vratena,
na hanyate na jiyate tvoto nenamamho ashnotyantito na durat.*

[RV (3.59.2); KYV (3.4.11.5)]

O Sun who is Mitra, may he who longs to worship You scrupulously get the full benefit of righteousness.

Prayer for longevity (noon worship) mid-day prayer

तच्चक्षुर्देवहितं पुरस्ताच्छुक्रमुच्चरत् पश्येम शरदशशतं, जीवेम शरदशशतं

tachchakshur devahitam purastachchukram uchcharat.

pashyema sharadashshatam jivema sharadashshatam

[RV (7.66.16), TA (4.42.5), AV (19.6.7)]

नन्दाम शरदशशतं, मोदाम शरदशशतं, भवाम शरदशशतं शृणवाम शरदशशतं,
प्रब्रवाम शरदशशतमजीतास्वाम शरदशशतं ज्योक् च सूर्यदृशे ॥
य उदगान्महतोऽर्णवाद्भिभ्राजमानः सरिरस्य मध्यात्
समा वृषभो लोहिताक्षस्सूर्यो विपश्चिन् पुनातु ॥

*nandama sharadashshatam modama sharadashshatam bhavama
sharadashshatam*

shrnavaama sharadashshatam

*prabravama sharadashshatam ajitasyama sharadashshatam jyok cha
suryamdrshe.*

ya udaganmahato arnavadvibhrajamanah sarjirasya madhyat

sama vrshabho lohitakshassuyo vipashchin manasaa punatu.



[TA (4.42.5)]

Translation:

May we see and adore for a hundred years the Sun whose orb rises in the east and who looks after the welfare of the celestials like an eye. May we live thus for a hundred years. May we rejoice with our kith and kin for a hundred years. May we live gloriously for a hundred years. May we speak sweetly for a hundred years. May we live for a hundred years undefeated by the forces of evil. We desire to enjoy gazing at the Sun for a hundred years.

May my whole mind be sanctified by the Sun who bestows all our needs, whose eyes are red, who is omniscient and who rises from amidst the waters of the ocean illumining all the quarters.

There is another prayer in the Atharva Veda (19.67) which is a variant of the one given above and which gives a deeper meaning of "**why we should live**":

For a hundred autumns, may we see,

For a hundred autumns may we live,

For a hundred autumns may we know,

For a hundred autumns may we rise and progress.

For a hundred autumns may we thrive,

For a hundred autumns may we be, (our true self)

For a hundred autumns may we become (perfect beings).

Aye, and even more than a hundred autumns.

Prayer to Sun

आसत्येन रजसा वर्तमानो निवेशयन्नमृतं मर्त्यं च ।
हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेनाऽदेवो याति भुवना विपश्यन् ॥

a satyena rajasa vartamano niveshayannamrtam martyam cha

hiranyayena savita rathenadevo yati bhuvana vipashyan



[RV (1.35.2), KYV (3.4.11.2), SYV (33.43); (34.31)]

Moving along the worlds of Truth duly establishing the immortal and the mortal,
God Savitr comes in his golden car beholding the worlds.

उद्वयं तमसरुपरि पश्यन्तो ज्योतिरुत्तरम् ।
देवं देवत्रा सूर्यमगन्म ज्योतिरुत्तमम् ।

udvayam tamasaspari pashyanto jyotiruttamam,

devam devatra suryam aganma jyotiruttamam.

[RV (1.50.10), Atharva (7.53.7), SYV (20.21), (27.10), (35.14), (38.24), KYV
(4.17.4)]

Beholding a higher Light beyond this darkness,

We have come to the highest Light, Surya, God among Gods.

उदुत्यं जातवेदसं देवं वहन्ति केतवः । दृशे विश्वाय सूर्यम् ॥

udutyam jatavedasam devam vahanti ketavah drshe vishvaya suryam

[RV (1.50.1), SV (31), Atharva, (13.2.16), (20.47.13), KYV (1.2.8.2), SYV (7.41),
(8.41), (33.31)]

The Rays bear upward the Divine, the all-knowing Sun so that all may behold
him.

चित्रं देवानामुदगादनीकं चक्षुर्मित्रस्य वरुणस्याग्नेः ।
आ प्रा द्यावा पृथिवी अन्तरिक्षं सूर्य आत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च ।

chitram devanam udaganikam chakshur mitrasya varunasyagneh,

a pra dyava prthivi antariksham surya atma jagatas tasthushashcha.



[RV (1.115.1), Atharva (13.2.35), (20.107.14); SYV (7.42), (13.46); KYV (1.4.43.1), (2.4.14.4)]

The wonderful face of the Gods has arisen, the eye of Mitra, Varuna and Agni;

The Sun, the soul, *atma*, of all that moves and moves not, has filled the Heaven, the Earth and the mid-world.

[This verse is the earliest reference to the concept of soul or *atman*]

Evening Prayer

Prayer for pardon of our offenses

इमं मे वरुण श्रुधी हवमद्या च मृडय । त्वामवस्युराचके ॥

imam me varuna shrudhi havamadya cha mrdaya, tvamavasyurachake.

[RV (1.25.19), Sama (1585), SYV (21.1), TB: (2.1.11.6)]

O Varuna, please fulfill this prayer of mine and make me happy here and now. I pray for Thy protection.

तत्त्वा यामि ब्रह्मणा वन्दमानस्तदाशास्ते यजमानो हविर्भिः ।
अहेडमानो वरुणेह बोध्युरुशँ स मा न आयुः प्रमोषीः ॥

tattva yami brahmana vandamanastadashaste yajamano havirbhih.

ahedamano varuneha bodhyurusham sa ma na ayuh pramoshih.

[RV (1.24.11), KYV (2.1.11.6), SYV (18.49), (21.2)]

I seek refuge in Thee uttering the Vedic mantras. The sacrificers seek Thee with the ingredients of offering.

यच्चिद्धिते विशो यथा प्रदेव वरुण व्रतम् । मिनीमसि द्यवि द्यवि ॥



yachchiddhite visho yatha pradeva varuna vratam, minimasi dyavi dyavi.

[RV 1.25.1, KYV 3.4.11.4]

O famous Varuna, please accept my prayer and don't ignore it. Please do not shorten my span of life.

यत्किंचेदं वरुण दैव्ये जनेऽभिद्रोहं मनुष्याश्चरामसि ।
अचिन्तयित्तव धर्मा युयोपिम मा नस्तस्मादेनसो देव रीरिषः ॥

***yatkinchedam varuna daivye jane abhidroham manushyashcharamasi,
achittiyattava dharma yuyopima ma nastasmadenaso deva ririshah.***

[RV (7.89.5), Atharva, (6.51.3), KYV (3.4.11.6)]

O Lord Varuna, please protect us without punishing us for sins committed by us in different ways—by omitting to perform daily Thy worship like the ignorant folk, by committing frauds on the celestials because of human ignorance or by infringing the path of righteousness laid down by you.

कितवासो यद्रिपुर्न दीवि यद्वाघ सत्यमुत यन्न विद्मः ।
सर्वा ता विष्य शिथिरेव देवाथा ते स्याम वरुण प्रिवासः ॥

kitavaso yadriputna divi yadvagha satyamuta yanna vidma.

sarva ta vishya shithireva devatha te syama varuna priyasa h.

[RV (5.85.8), KYV (3.4.11.6)]

O Varuna, please expunge the sin like those attributed to me unjustly by wicked people like gamblers who go where the good do not go or the sins committed by me consciously or unconsciously. We must ever remain beloved of you.

The next mantra is addressed to the Divine Mother indicating that the worship is concluded.



उ॒त्त॒मे॑ शि॒खरे॑ दे॒वि (जा॒ते) भू॒म्यां प॑र्व॒त॒मूर्ध॑नि ।
ब्रा॒ह्म॒णे॑भ्योऽभ्य॑नु॒ज्ञा॒ता ग॒च्छ दे॒वि य॒थासु॑खम् ॥

uttame shikhare devi (jate)bhumyam parvata murdhani,

brahmanebhyo abhyanujnata gachchha devi yathasukham.

—(Mahanarayana upanishad)

O Goddess, who resides always at the supreme peak the earth's and mountains (i.e., the secret abode in our heart) please return tell the brahmanas call you again.

Explanation:

The idea is that even though we have stopped the contemplation, the Goddess watches us from her highest abode in us just as a mother watches her children play without being noticed by them.

The final mantra is a salutation to the Lord and the spouse together, Umamaheshvara.

ऋ॒त॒स॒त्यं प॑रं ब्र॒ह्म पु॒रुषं॑ कृ॒ष्ण॒पि॒ङ्ग॒लम् ।
ऊ॒र्ध्व॑रे॒तं वि॒रूपा॑क्षं वि॒श्वरू॑पाय॒ वै नमो॑ नमः ॥

rtam satyam param brahma purusham krshnapingalam,

urdhvaretam virupaksham vishvarupaya vai namo namah.

—Mahanarayana Upanishad (23.1)

Translation:

Supreme Brahman, the Absolute Reality, has assumed the form of Umaamaheshvara, dark blue and reddish brown in hue, absolutely chaste and possessing uncommon eyes. Salutations to Her alone who is the Soul of the universe or whose form is the universe.



Invocatory Mantras for Japa of Om

प्रणवस्य ऋषिः ब्रह्मा । देवी गायत्री छन्दः । परमात्मा देवता ।

pranavasya rshih brahma devi gayatri chhandah paramatma devata

Brahma is the rishi of pranava

Goddess gayatri is the metre.

The deity or devata is the Supreme soul or paramatma.

भूरादि सप्त व्याहृतीनां अत्रि भृगु कुत्स वसिष्ठ गौतम काश्यपाङ्गिरस ऋषयः ।

bhuradi sapta vyahrtinam atri bhrgu kutsa vasishtha gautama kashyapangirasa rshayah

For the seven planes *bhuh* etc, the rishis are Atri, Bhrgu, Kutsa, Vasishtha, Gautama, Kashyapa, Angirasa.

गायत्री उष्णिक् अनुष्टुप्बृहती पङ्क्ती तृष्टुप् जगत्यः छन्दांसि ।

gayatri ushnik anushtupbrhati pankti trshtup jagatyah chhandamsi

The metres are: *gaayatri, ushnik, anushtup, brhati, pankti, trshtup, jagati*.

अग्नि वायु अर्क वागीश वरुण इन्द्र विश्वेदेवा देवताः ।

agni vayu arka vagisha varuna indra vishvedeva devatah

The deities are: Agni, Vayu, Arka, Vagisha, Varuna, Indra, and the All-gods.





Prayer for the SUN the soul of all that moves and moves not (morning worship) - Morning Prayer to the Spiritual Sun

मित्रस्य चर्षणी धृतः श्रवो देवस्य सानसिम् । सत्यं चित्रश्रवस्तमम् ॥

***mitrasya charshani dhrtah shravo devasya sanasim satyam
chitrashravastamam***

[RV (3.59.6); KYV (3.4.11.5); (4.1.6.3); SYV (11.62)]

I meditate on the glory and fame of the all-protecting Sun who is adorable, eternal, bewitching the hearts of all listeners.

मित्रो जनान् यातयति प्रजानन् मित्रो दाधार पृथिवीमुतद्वाम् ।
मित्रः कृष्टीरनिमिषाभिचष्टे सत्याव हव्यं घृतवद्विधेम ॥

mitrojanan yatayati prajanan mitrodadhara prthivim utadyam,

***mitrah krshtir animishabhi chashte satyaya [mitraya] havyam ghrtavad
vidhema.***

[RV (3.59.1) with some word replacements KYV (3.4.11.5)]

The Sun guides all, knowing everything. He supports the earth and the sky. He watches all creation unwinkingly. To him we offer hymns endowed with clarity (or rice with ghee, for ritualists) for attaining eternal fruits.

प्र स मित्र मर्तो अस्तु प्रयस्वान् यस्त आदित्य शिक्षति व्रतेन ।
न हन्यते न जीयते त्वोतो नेनमँहो अश्रोत्यन्तितो न दूरात् ॥

pra sa mitra marto astu prayasvan yasta aditya shikshati vratena,

na hanyate na jiyate tvoto nenamamho ashnotyantito na durat.

[RV (3.59.2); KYV (3.4.11.5)]

O Sun who is Mitra, may he who longs to worship you scrupulously get the full benefit of righteousness.



Prayer for longevity (noon worship) mid-day prayer

तच्चक्षुर्देवहितं पुरस्ताच्छुक्रमुच्चरत् पश्येम शरदशशतं, जीवेम शरदशशतं

tachchakshur devahitam purastachchukram uchcharat. pashyema sharadashshatam jivema sharadashshatam

[RV (7.66.16), TA (4.42.5), AV (19.6.7)]

नन्दाम शरदशशतं, मोदाम शरदशशतं, भवाम शरदशशतं शृणवाम शरदशशतं,
प्रब्रवाम शरदशशतमजीतास्याम शरदशशतं ज्योक् च सूर्यदृशे ॥
य उदगान्महतोऽर्णवाद्रिभ्राजमानः सरिरस्य मध्वात्
समा वृषभो लोहिताक्षस्सूर्यो विपश्चिन् पुनातु ॥

nandama sharadashshatam modama sharadashshatam bhavama sharadashshatam

shrnavaama sharadashshatam

prabravama sharadashshatam ajitasyama sharadashshatam jyok cha suryamdrshe.

ya udaganmahato arnavadvibhrajamanah sarjirasya madhyat

sama vrshabho lohitaakshassuryo vipashchin manasaa punatu.

[TA (4.42.5)]

Translation:

May we see and adore for a hundred years the Sun whose orb rises in the east and who looks after the welfare of the celestials like an eye. May we live thus for a hundred years. May we rejoice with our kith and kin for a hundred years. May we live gloriously for a hundred years. May we speak sweetly for a hundred years. May we live for a hundred years undefeated by the forces of evil. We desire to enjoy gazing at the Sun for a hundred years.

May my whole mind be sanctified by the Sun who bestows all our needs, whose eyes are red, who is omniscient and who rises from amidst the waters of the ocean illumining all the quarters.



Sandhya Mantras

There is another prayer in the Atharva Veda (19.67) which is a variant of the one given above and which gives a deeper meaning of **"why we should live"**:

For a hundred autumns, may we see,

For a hundred autumns may we live,

For a hundred autumns may we know,

For a hundred autumns may we rise and progress.

For a hundred autumns may we thrive,

For a hundred autumns may we be, (our true self)

For a hundred autumns may we become (perfect beings).

Aye, and even more than a hundred autumns.

Prayer to Sun

आसत्वेन रजसा वर्तमानो निवेशयन्नमृतं मर्त्यं च ।
हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेनाऽदेवो याति भुवना विपश्यन् ॥

a satyena rajasa vartamano niveshayannamrtam martyam cha

hiranyayena savita rathenadevo yati bhuvana vipashyan.

[RV (1.35.2), KYV (3.4.11.2), SYV (33.43); (34.31)]

Moving along the worlds of Truth duly establishing the immortal and the mortal,

God Savitr comes in his golden car beholding the worlds.

उद्वयं तमसरूपरि पश्यन्तो ज्योतिरुत्तमम् ।
देवं देवत्रा सूर्यमगन्म ज्योतिरुत्तमम् ।

udvayam tamasaspari pashyanto jyotiruttamam,



devam devatra suryam aganma jyotir uttamam.

[RV (1.50.10), Atharva (7.53.7), SYV (20.21), (27.10), (35.14), (38.24), KYV (4.17.4)]

Beholding a higher Light beyond this darkness,

We have come to the highest Light, Surya, God among Gods.

उदुत्यं जातवेदसं देवं वहन्ति केतवः । दृशे विश्वाय सूर्यम् ॥

udutyam jatavedasam devam vahanti ketavah drshe vishvaya suryam

[RV (1.50.1), SV (31), Atharva, (13.2.16), (20.47.13), KYV (1.2.8.2), SYV (7.41), (8.41), (33.31)]

The Rays bear upward the Divine, the all-knowing Sun so that all may behold him.

चित्रं देवानामुदगादनीकं चक्षुर्मित्रस्य वरुणस्याग्नेः ।
आ प्रा द्यावा पृथिवी अन्तरिक्षं सूर्य आत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च ।

chitram devanam udagadanikam chakshur mitrasya varunasyagneh,

a pra dyava prthivi antariksham surya atma jagatas tasthushashcha.

[RV (1.115.1), Atharva (13.2.35), (20.107.14); SYV (7.42), (13.46); KYV (1.4.43.1), (2.4.14.4)]

The wonderful face of the Gods has arisen, the eye of Mitra, Varuna and Agni;

The Sun, the soul, *atma*, of all that moves and moves not, has filled the Heaven, the Earth and the mid-world.

[This verse is the earliest reference to the concept of soul or *atman*]





Evening Prayer - Prayer for pardon of our offenses

इमं मे वरुण श्रुधी हवमद्या च मृडय । त्वामवस्युराचके ॥

imam me varuna shrudhi havamadya cha mrdaya, tvamavasyurachake.

[RV (1.25.19), Sama (1585), SYV (21.1), TB: (2.1.11.6)]

O Varuna, please fulfill this prayer of mine and make me happy here and now. I pray for Thy protection.

तत्त्वा यामि ब्रह्मणा वन्दमानस्तदाशास्ते यजमानो हविर्भिः ।
अहेडमानो वरुणेह बोध्युरुशँ स मा न आयुः प्रमोषीः ॥

tattva yami brahmana vandamanastadashaste yajamano havirbhih.

ahedamano varuneha bodhyurusham sa ma na ayuh pramoshih.

[RV (1.24.11), KYV (2.1.11.6), SYV (18.49), (21.2)]

I seek refuge in Thee uttering the Vedic mantras. The sacrificers seek Thee with the ingredients of offering.

यच्चिद्धिते विशो यथा प्रदेव वरुण व्रतम् । मिनीमसि द्यवि द्यवि ॥

yachchiddhite visho yatha pradeva varuna vratam, minimasi dyavi dyavi.

[RV 1.25.1, KYV 3.4.11.4]

O famous Varuna, please accept my prayer and don't ignore it. Please do not shorten my span of life.

यत्किंचेदं वरुण दैव्ये जनेऽभिद्रोहं मनुष्याश्चरामसि ।
अचिल्लीयत्तव धर्मा युयोपिम मा नस्तस्मादेनसो देव रीरिषः ॥



*yatkinchedam varuna daivye jane abhidroham manushyashcharamasi,
achittiyattava dharma yuyopima ma nastasmadenaso deva ririshah.*

[RV (7.89.5), Atharva, (6.51.3), KYV (3.4.11.6)]

O Lord Varuna, please protect us without punishing us for sins committed by us in different ways—by omitting to perform daily Thy worship like the ignorant folk, by committing frauds on the celestials because of human ignorance or by infringing the path of righteousness laid down by you.

कितवासो यद्रिपुर्न दीवि बद्धाघ सत्यमुत यन्न विद्मः ।
सर्वा ता विष्य शिथिरेव देवाथा ते स्याम वरुण प्रिवासः ॥

kitavaso yadripurna divi yadvagha satyamuta yanna vidma.

sarva ta vishya shithireva devatha te syama varuna priyasa h.

[RV (5.85.8), KYV (3.4.11.6)]

O Varuna, please expunge the sin like those attributed to me unjustly by wicked people like gamblers who go where the good do not go or the sins committed by me consciously or unconsciously. We must ever remain beloved of you.





Some famous Short Mantras

For meditation and japa, short mantras are especially attractive because there is less possibility of the mind wondering away from the mantra, each time it is recited. We give here some famous short mantras

Shiva

Om namah shivaya

[Om, salutation to Shiva.]

This is called *panchakshari* since it has 5 syllables.

Hari

om namo narayanaya

[Om, salutation to Narayana]

It is called *ashtakshari* since it has eight syllables

Sri Krishna

om namo bhagavate vasudevaya

(Om, salutation to the Lord, the son of Vasudeva)

Sri Narayana

om namo narayanaya

Mantra from Isha upanishad

so'ham



Sandhya Mantras

(He am I)

Mantra from Chhandogya upanishad

aham brahmasmi

(I am Brahman)





Other Gayatri-type Mantras for Contemplation

Mahanarayana Upanishad gives several mantras in the form of gayatri for invoking gods and goddesses like Ganapati, Rudra, Vishnu, Krishna, Durga. We give here a few of them.

Ganapati

***tat purushaya vidmahe vakratundaya dhimahi, tanno dantin
prachodayat***

May we know the Supreme Person. We meditate upon Vakratunda. May he (*dantin*) activate us.

vakratunda

the person with the flexible trunk

dantin

one with the tusks.

Rudra

***tat purushaya vidmahe mahadevaya dhimahi tan no rudrah
prachodayat.***

May we know the Supreme Person. We meditate upon the Great Lord, Mahadeva. May he, Rudra, activate us.

Vishnu

narayanaya vidmahe vasudevaya dhimahi, tan no vishnuh prachodayat.

May we know Narayana. We meditate upon Vasudeva. May he, Vishnu, activate us.





Meditation on the Supreme Light

Light is a popular symbol for knowledge and wisdom. Many would like to meditate on Light as a formless symbol of the Supreme Divine. Sri Aurobindo has revealed a mantra of the Gayatri type for such a meditation.

tat savitur varam rupam jyotih parasya dhimahi, yan nah satyena dipayet.

Let us meditate on the most auspicious (best) form of Savitri, on the Light of the Supreme which shall illumine us with the supreme Truth.

Explanation:

We meditate upon that Light which is the best, the most auspicious Form of the Supreme person, Savitri the creator. That (Light) is His body accessible to yogic vision. That Supreme splendour of Savitri shall illumine us Truth, with a constant state of being in separate from the Supreme Sat and its Light.





Who may perform sandhya?

The foundation of all our spiritual practices is the Samhita literature made of the four Samhitas and Upanishads. These books explicitly state that any one who believes in the *sanatana dharma* is called upon to hear the vedic mantras and perform the worship to the best of his/her ability. Shukla Yajurveda Samhita (26.2) states so explicitly. A translation of this verse can be found by clicking on the Yajurveda Samhita in the main page and going to the section 'Translation'.

Again all women were also entreated to recite the Veda mantras and perform sandhya. The quotation above is one such authority. The same idea is stated in the Valmiki Ramayana. The famous poet Bana of seventh CE states in his famous work, *kadambari*, that all ladies were entreated to become familiar with the text Brahma sutras, which deals with the philosophy of the Upanishads.

All the rules restricting the performance of Sandhya to certain castes and groups come into vogue only during the last one thousand years or so. As mentioned earlier, our ancient books of authority like the Veda Samhitas and Upanishads do not support such restrictions.





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[This is a compilation of the Vedic mantras built around the Sandhya mantras with some additions like Purusha sukta and naarayaNa suukta.
It has both roman transliteration and English translation. Its compiler is a great scholar who was the first person to translate Sri Shankara's Commentaries into English. Highly recommended]

