

सन्ध्यावन्दनम्
Sandhyā-Vandanam
A Vedic Meditation on the Supreme Reality

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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-ghrāṇāsya 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.