

Trikal Sandhya

Definition of Sandhya

Sandhya in the English language means transition. Transitions are changes that happen to go from one state to another. There are many transitions that happen in your daily lives as well as in the environment as well as the whole universe. Some transitions are too subtle that they are not perceptible as others. From instance changes that happen in us are hunger, thirst, tired, etc. A change that happens in the environment is a sudden drop in temperature due to a northern wind that blows cold air, for instance a drop in temperature of 20 degrees within an hour. A change that happens in the solar system is the occurrence of a solar or lunar eclipse. Rise in ocean tide is a change due to the moon.

Transitions like ice to water, water to steam, dawn and dusk happen and we are aware of them. At a higher level, scriptures talk about transitions between the yug cycles, there is a sandhya between Satya and Treta yugs. Going one step further there is a transition between nothingness to creation and back to nothingness, i.e. Advait (oneness) to Dvait (oneness to many) and back to Advait.

Wakeup time

When we wake up in the morning, it is God doing the action of waking us up. Think of all actions that you perform. For every action that you perform there is a thought (motive) behind the action. For instance, I am thirsty (motive), I need to drink water (thought of action), then the action of drinking the water. Examine all your actions and you will see that there is always a thought before the action and that is the reason you proclaim I did this, I did that.

Think about the waking action, you do not think I need to wake up and then you awake up. The waking up action happens and you say I am awake. Who performed this action? You were not even conscious just before you woke up. Someone moved you to the wakefulness state. Who does this for you? God does this for you; God who is within this body of yours is doing this action. This action of God is his gift to us. So, you might ask, "What gift?" This gift is called 'Srumruti Daan' or gift of memory. From susupti (sleep) to jagruti (wakefulness) is the transition with the delivery of gift of memory in the process.

**Karagre vasate Lakshmeehi Karamoole Sarasvatee |
Kara-madhya tu Govindah Prabhaate kara-darshanam ||**

Meaning: The Goddess of wealth, Lakshmee resides at the fingertips, the Goddess of knowledge, Sarasvatee resides at the base of the palm and the Lord Krishna (Govida) resides in the middle of the palm and therefore we must look at our palm every morning.

**Samudra-vasane Devi Parvata-sthana-mandale |
Vishnupatni namas-tubhyam Paada-sparsham kshamasva me ||**

Meaning: Oh! Mother Earth, oceans are your clothes, mountains are your bosom, wife of Lord Vishnu, I bow to thee. Please forgive me for the touch of my feet.

Vasudeva-sutan Devam Kansa-Chaanura-mardanam |

Devaki-paramaa nandam Krushnam vande jagad-gurum ||

Meaning: Son of Vasudev, the destroyer (demons) Kansa and Chanura, Supreme bliss of Devaki (mother), the guru of the world, Lord Krishna, I Salute thee.

The first slok talks about “What is in my hand? What is in my control to an extent? What am I supposed to do during the day?” Goddess Laxmi is at my finger tips, i.e. I have to work with my hands to earn my livelihood. Goddess Sarasvati is the base of my hand, I have to use my intellect and knowledge to make the right decision. God is the middle, to guide me and for me to have a God centric life. If you bend your fingers to the middle of the hand then, all fingers are in a line, a reminder that even though we are different, in front of God we are the same.

The second slok is recited for mother earth. We have to have reverence for mother earth since without her we cannot exist. The earth provides so much for us, if we think of what all is derived from the earth. Food, water, air, materials, matter that is converted to energy, etc. are all obtained from mother earth. We should have gratitude towards mother Earth. She sustains us our whole life without asking anything in return. And how do we treat her, we touch her with our feet. That is why we have to ask for her forgiveness.

The last slok reminds us to build personal relationship with God. We human beings who have forms can relate to God in form; Krushna is God in form. We should create an alliance with God and work on maintaining a strong alliance then only can we rely on God to come to our aid in times of need.

Meal time

Most of us eat when we are hungry. What does hunger tell us? Hunger is a predecessor for letting us know that we need more energy. We use up energy when we do actions. Hunger is an indication that we need to replenish ourselves. So now this begs the question of how is food matter we eat gets converted into energy. Science tells us that there are involuntary actions within us, one of them being the process of digestion and storage of energy. Do you really think there are involuntary actions? Every action has an initiation, and there has to be an active initiator for the action to start. Our scriptures tell us that God within us is the initiator of actions not started by me. Here we have the understanding of God is within us or in-dwelling God. God resides in this body. Each and everyone of us is great because God is within us. There is no way for us to see God outside of us; we have to turn our gaze inward to see God. This is the reason for concentration, meditation and transcendental meditation or Samadhi.

There is a transition that happens from hunger to fullness. And in this transition is the gift of energy; this is Shakti Daan. The transition is from atrupti (un-satisfaction) to trupti (satisfaction) and the gift is of Shakti (energy).

The first three sloks of this prayer are from the Bhagavad Geeta. Chapter 3 slok 13, Chapter 9 slok 21 and Chapter 15 slok 14 are the three sloks. These sloks are spoken by Bhagavan Krushna and addressed to Arjun, our representative.

**Yagna-shishta-shinah santo muchyante sarva-kilbishaih |
Bhunjate te tvagham paapaa ye pachantyaatma-kaaranaat ||**

Meaning: The devotees of God are freed from all sins because they eat food which is offered (to God) first for (Yagna) sacrifice. Others who cook food only for themselves truly “eat sin.”

**Yat-karoshi yadashnaasi yaj yaj-juhoshi dadaasi yat |
Yat-tapasyasi Kaunteya tat-kurushva madarpanam ||**

Meaning: O! Kaunteya (Arjun), son of Kunti, all that you do, all that you eat, offer it as a sacrifice. Whatever austerity you perform, do it as an offering to me.

**Aham vaishvanaro bhootvaa praaninaan deha-maashritah |
Praanaa-paana samaayuktah pachaamyannam chaturvidham ||**

Meaning: “I reside in humans and also animals, I am the fire which digests the four kinds of food and I control the breathing and other functions of the body.”

**Om saha naa-vavatu saha nau bhunaktu saha viryam karavaa-vahai |
tejasvi naa-vadhi-tamastu maa vidvishaa-vahai ||
Om shaantih shaantih shaantihi**

Meaning: Oh! Lord, protect and defend us both. Let us do divine work together. Let our knowledge be radiant. Let us not envy each other, and let us always live in peace and harmony.

The first slok tells us to offer whatever we eat to God. Why the offer? Because once we eat it, God takes care of that food and processes it. We have to realize that and have the understanding that God, my active partner, is working with me for my existence.

The second one tells that whatever we do should be given to God for safe keeping. Remember when you were little and you went to parties and maybe there was distribution of candies or toys. You would give them to your mother to safe keep for you. Why did you do that? You did that because you knew that your mother loved you and she would take care of them for you. This is exactly what we should do and ask God, our mother, to safe keep all our actions. Another thought that must also be explored is that of God, my active partner, is working with me and therefore entitled just as much as myself.

In the third slok God is saying that He resides in us and animals and through control of breath and other action digests four kinds of food. Here we get the direct message of in-dwelling God and He performs a number of actions for us. Again we need to understand that there are no involuntary actions, all these actions are divine actions performed by God for us. The four kinds of food are; 1) food that is chewed, 2) food that is drunk, 3) food that is licked and 4) food that is sucked.

The last slok is recited by Guru and Sishya (disciple). In the recital, both Guru and disciple are asking for the same thing. This slok should remind us that we are not alone in this world, there are others with me. I just cannot think about myself, I have to think about others too. How are my relationships with others? What are my duties towards others? How are my behaviors towards others? From this comes the great thought, “Do unto others, what you want others to do unto you.”

Sleep time

At sleep time we have approached the end of our day. We have done all kinds of actions, we have experienced many things, we have worked with others, and we have learned in the process. Due to our ignorance, lack of knowledge, Avidhya (false learning or information) and ego we have also made many mistakes. We have done good too, which we may or may not realize. During the day we may have hurt ourselves or others, we may have been hurt by others, or we may be hurt and be in physical pain. Some of us may have sickness, acute (short term) or chronic (long term), and as such suffered during the day. Our day may have gone wonderfully and we had an adventure. However kind of day we had, at sleep time all of that has to end.

At sleep time the next thing that happens to all of us is the transition from consciousness (awareness) to unconsciousness (unawareness). There is a gift associated with this transition also. This gift is Shanti Daan, the gift of peace. The transition is from jagruti to susupti with the gift of Shanti. Again you have to think about what happens just before you fall asleep. You are in bed and your eyes are closed but you are very well aware of yourself and your thought process is churning, but all of a sudden without you being aware, you are gone. Your thoughts stop, your 'I-ness' disappears, and your possessions disappear. Even those who have physical pains experience this state in the night. This is the gift of peace God bestows upon us.

**Krushnaaya Vaasudevaaya haraye Parmaatmane |
Pranata-klesha-naashaaya Govindaaya namo namah ||**

Meaning: I bow and pray to Lord Krushna, son of Vasudev, he who takes away sorrow, suffering and troubles of those who ask for his protection.

**Kara-charan-krutam vaak-kaaya-jam karmajam vaa
shravana-nayanajam vaa manasam va-aparadham |
Vihitam-avihitam va sarva-me-tat kshamasva jaya jaya karunaabdhe
Shree Mahaadeva Shambho ||**

Meaning: Oh! Mahadev, the Ocean of Compassion, please forgive me if I have done anything wrong, knowingly or unknowingly by my hands, feet, by my speech, body, by my actions, by my ears, eyes, by my mind. Let victory be yours.

**Tvameva maataa cha pitaa tvameva tvameva bandhush-cha sakhaa tvameva |
Tvameva vidyaa dravinam tvameva tvameva sarvam mama deva-deva ||**

Meaning: Oh! God! (Oh Supreme Being) You are my mother, you are my father, you are my brother, you are my friend, you are the knowledge, you are the wealth, and you are everything to me.

When we are reciting the first slok, we are surrendering to Bhagavan Krushna under whose protection, our suffering, troubles and sorrows are forgotten by us. We have to understand the relationship between a patient and a doctor. When a patient goes to a doctor for a problem, the doctor says he can cure the problem if his treatment will be followed by the patient. The patient has surrendered to the doctor and agreed to the treatment before he is well again. Similarly we have to surrender to Lord Krushna so he can take good care of us.

The second slok is directed to Lord Shiva, the compassionate one. Here we are asking for forgiveness for all sins we have committed knowingly or unknowingly. Sins committed by hands, feet, by speech, body, by actions, by ears, eyes, by mind, and by thoughts. Since we are not full of knowledge, we are not doing all the right actions and thus we have to ask God for forgiveness. Here is the beginning of learning to ask for forgiveness and being able to forgive. The last slok deals with our relationship to God. God is everything to me and the understanding obtained from the recital of this slok will allow us to build a stronger relationship with God. With God on my side, I am not afraid any more, and can build the confidence to tackle any task, etc.

God's love for us

In reciting the Trikal Sandhya we remember God at least three times a day. In the meaning of these sloks is the understanding that God in within me (in-dwelling) and my active partner. Every day he bestows gifts upon us and keeps us going. Without his active support and actions we would not be able to exist in this world. His love for us drives Him to do so much for us, even if we turn away from Him, He keeps doing for us. God is the eternal optimist who hopes that his child will one day turn towards Him and come home. Upon reciting the Trikal Sandhya, we should work on our gratitude towards God as well as appreciation for Him. The more we think and understand God's love for us our love for God will also increase.

Points:

- Definition of Sandhya.
- Wakeup is action without our thought.
- Gift of memory.
- Rely on myself.
- Reverence for mother earth.
- Build alliance with God.
- In-dwelling God.
- Active partner.
- Relationship with others (Guru Shishah relationship)
- Surrender to God.
- Forgiveness from God
- Realization of God is everything to me.