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Surya Upanishad

It is customary to perform Panchayatana puja daily among Hindu homes. It is a daily worship of the five deities viz., Ganesha, Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu and Surya (The Sun). Surya occupies a special status among these five deities because He is the only Pratyaksha Devata i.e. He is the only one Deity who is visible to the naked eye. The objective of another prescribed daily ritual, Sandhyaavandanam, is the worship of Surya during the Morning, the Mid Day and the Dusk. The Gayatri mantra recited during this ritual is the most sacred invocation to the Sun God praying for a Good Day.

Worship of the Sun God or Suryopasana is as ancient as Hinduism itself having its origin from Vedic times. Hence numerous hymns addressed to Him are found in all the four Vedas - e.g. Saura Sukta of the Rig Veda, Aruna Prashna of the Taittiriya Aranyaka, Surya Namaskara mantras, Surya Upanishad of Atharva Veda etc. These hymns describe the celestial body as the source of energy and sustainer of all life on the planet earth. They portray the Sun as the store house of inexhaustible power and radiance. The Sun god is also referred to as Aditya. The origin of the worship of the Sun in India is thus several centuries old.

Surya Upanishad

One of the famous Vedic Hymns in praise of the Sun God is Surya Upanishad which finds place in the Atharva Veda.

The seer is Brahma, metre Gayatri, Aditya the deity, 'Hamsas so'ham with Agni and Narayana is the seed, the power is hrillekha or hrim, the pin is the power in the process of unfolding the sky etc., the application is its use in repetition for winning the four human goals. The six limbs consist of the seed with six vowels added.

He indeed is a Brahmana who thus knows the golden Narayana with the blessed sun, impeller of the time-wheel, having four arms and two lotuses, showing promise of refuge and boon, mounted on the sun chariot, set in the red lotus.

Om, Earth, middle region and sky; we meditate on the adorable splendour of Savitar who may inspire our thoughts. The sun is the self of the world, moving as well as un-moving. From Surya indeed are these creatures born, the Yajna, Parjanya, food and spirit.

I bow to you Aditya; you are the agent himself, the manifest Brahman, Rudra, Vishnu, Rig-Veda etc., as well as all the chandas (Metre-Vedas).

From Aditya is born Vayu, Bhumi, water, fire, sky, directions, Devas, Vedas; the sun scorches this sphere; this sun is Brahman, the inner organ, mind, intellect, mind-stuff and Ego, Prana etc., (the five airs), the five sense organs and five motor organs, sound, touch, form, taste and smell; speech, taking (with the hands) release (of the bowels), joy.

I bow to Mitra, Bhanu, (protect me from death), to the shining one, the cause of the universe.

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