

# SUN–THE EYE OF THE WORLD

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by

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In Sanskrit, Makara Sankranti means the time when the sun crosses the tropic of Capricorn. The day is of special significance to all those leading a spiritual life and mention has been made of the commencement of this new period in such scriptures as the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita. The sun comes to the North, energising and invigorating all life wherever it is, and on whatever he sheds his light. In esoteric parlance, in mystic terminology, the sun is regarded as the presiding deity over the self of man, while the moon is the presiding deity over the mind of man. The self or the soul is different from the mind; the Atman and the Manas are differentiated by their metaphysical and psychological characteristics, respectively. The self of man is presided over by the sun or Surya. The sun is designated as Atmakaraka. "Surya atma jagatas tasthanascha," says the Veda. The Rig Veda proclaims the spiritual presiding principle in the sun as the invigorator, energiser of the self of all created beings. That is the meaning of the Vedic prayer mentioned above. Of all the things that move and do not move, of all that is organic or inorganic, of everything in creation, the solar principle is the self, as it were, the pivot around which all individual energies revolve. We live by the sun and die if the sun is not to be. Spiritually envisaged, esoterically conceived, the sun is not merely a huge orb of atomic energy as the physicists would tell us, but a radiant mass of life-giving vitality to

everyone. The sun is not merely a heating principle, like an electric heater or a fire-like burning mass, or a huge conflagration of fire, because these cannot give you that energy which the sun supplies to you. I shall give a small analogy to give you an idea as to what the sun can contain and does contain.

Do you know what the earth contains? Can you imagine what energy, what vitality, what abundance, what resources are contained in the earth? You have there gold, you have diamonds, you have mineral resources lying under different parts and bowels of the earth, you have gas and petrol and what not; and where do you get this energy from, for the sake of the living beings on earth? The trees vigorously rise from the earth, sucking energy from the bottom of the earth, and they seek energy from above - from the rays of the sun. When we geologically and physically look into the structure of this earth, and chemically examine its contents, biologically investigate into its resources, as a pure scientific mind, we will realise that the earth is not dead matter. It is energy-embodiment, on whose bounties we are alive here. The food that we eat is not dead matter, otherwise it cannot give us energy. From where do we get energy? From the food that we eat. From where do we get the food? From the earth. If energy is to come from food, naturally the source of it must be full of energy. The earth cannot be inanimate, as we generally dub it to be. It is not inorganic; there is something organic and living, meaningful and significant in it, and even many millions of years ago the earth had been declared to be a part of the solar constitution. As our wise men tell us, once upon a time a mighty gigantic star happened to rush by the side of the electromagnetic field of the sun - some light years away from the sun, of course, not merely a few miles. The impact of this upon the orb of the sun was such that it broke off a little piece of the sun. That little piece, being a flaming, diverging, powerful energy-block, rushing from the sun, boiling with the flame of what the sun is, is supposed to have come down after thousands of years, cooling down gradually from the flaming condition in which it was to a cooler

condition, and from the cooler condition to a still cooler condition, then from that condition into the gaseous condition, from the gaseous to the liquid condition, and from the liquid condition to the solid condition that we see today. So, all this wonderful earth is nothing but a part of the sun, and its greatness can be traced back to the greatness of the sun which cannot be, by logical deduction, a mere physical or inorganic form as uninformed science may tell us.

There is something wonderful and mysterious in the sun and there is some great significance in connecting the principle of the sun with the self of man, as there is also equal significance in connecting of the moon with the mind of man. You may know that during the full moon and the new moon days the mind gets affected. Those who are weaklings and who are not mentally strong will feel this impact more than normal persons. Normal persons do not feel it, but those who are not normal in their minds will feel the effect strongly. The moon, the stars, the sun and all the stellar system exert a mutual influence amongst themselves. You may know that during the full moon the ocean rises up, wells up as if to greet the rising moon and, naturally, the pull must be felt everywhere on earth, but you cannot see it.

Such is the invisible impact of the higher forces of nature, whose father is the sun. When the sun's influence is felt more and more, the self is supposed to also exert influence in its activity, operation. So, this particular day, we call Makara Sankranti, is holy.

The Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita tell us that those who die during these six months of the northern course of the sun, rise from the earthly entanglements to the higher regions presided over by noble deities, finally piercing through the orb of the sun. Crossing the barrier of the sun, the soul crosses still higher regions of resplendence and spiritual magnificence. The Upanishads and such scriptures describe that while the passage of the moon during the six months of the southern course of the sun is the passage of

return to the earth, the passage through the sun is the passage to salvation, liberation of the spirit.

Those who cross the barrier of the sun come not to this mortal world again. They go to higher regions until the soul reaches universal salvation, until the soul becomes everything, enters into everything everywhere, as the Mundaka Upanishad tells us. Seekers of Truth, aspirants on the path of Yoga, devotees of God, lovers of mankind - all these have to pay tribute to the supreme father of energy, vitality, deathlessness, which is Surya. "Suryah pratyaksha devata": The sun is the visible God. If you have any visible God, it is the sun before you. You cannot see God in His pristine excellence, but you can see God through the operation of his powers in nature. In the Purusha Sukta, the sun is compared to the eyes of the Virat Purusha, the Cosmic Person. These are true comparisons and symbols which give us an idea of the magnitude and the importance of the sun in our life. People pray that their death should take place during the six-month period of the northern movement of the sun. In the Mahabharata we are told that Bhishma waited for his departure until the sun moved to the north. So there is not merely an astronomical or physical significance to our lives in the movement of the sun towards the north, but there is also a biological, vital and psychological as well as spiritual meaning in this northern sojourn of the sun. Devotees and seekers of Yoga have, therefore, to bring to their minds this internal world and its significance which is beyond and farther than the physical world. The inner world is deeper than the outer.

In some of the scriptures we are told that there are twelve suns. Where are the twelve suns? We see only one sun in the sky. We can regard these twelve suns as the principle inherent within the physical sun, one behind the other. Just as we have the vital body behind the physical body, the mental body behind the vital body, the intellectual body behind the mental body, and the spiritual principle in us behind the intellectual body, so also there are energies behind energies, powers within powers, one transcending

the other, until the twelfth sun is reached. It is identified with Maha-Vishnu or the Supreme Benefactor of Creation, the Ruler of the Cosmos. The twelfth sun is Vishnu Himself. He cannot be seen with the physical eyes because these esoteric suns are internal to the physical sun. You cannot see the vital body or the mental body, intellectual body or the spiritual principle in yourself. You cannot see anything inside the body. Inasmuch as we live in the physical body and see a physical world, we see also a physical sun. When we enter the vital body, we will enter the vital world and see a vital sun, and so on and so forth, and when we reach the ultimate principle within us by the practice of Yoga, we will see the hidden essence behind the world. It is not a country; it is not a realm, a village or a city, or any locality populated by people. A marvellous ocean of light and energy is presided over by the twelfth sun, says the scripture.

There is much behind these great observances such as the Makara Sankranti and many others of a similar nature, in the spiritual destiny of man. We live a material life, not knowing what we really are, what the world is. We seem to be so ignorant of the values that are inherent and within us that we are dashed hither and thither by the winds of fate, controlling the physical world and the physical body of people. The more you move inward into yourself, the more you will also see the inner mystery of the world. When you go to the vital body within you, you can see the vital body of other people seated here. Because you are now in the physical body, you see the physical body of others. When you enter your mental body, you can see the minds of other people, and when you enter your intellectual body, you can see the intellects of other people seated here. And when you enter your spiritual principle within, you can see the spirituality in the world and the spiritual principle in the whole cosmos.

The twelve suns described in the Srimad Bhagavata and other scriptures are not twelve physical suns hanging in the sky, but twelve layers of principle, one behind the other, culminating in the spiritual Reality as the sun, wherein the

individual, the world and God become one. In the physical realm you are different, the world is different and God is different. There is no connection apparently between one and the other. When you go deeper, the three principles come nearer and nearer to one another. The world is absolutely isolated now. You have no control over it; it threatens you every moment. You are afraid of the world. Why? Because it is physically isolated from your physical body. And so God is also a transcendent something of which you have no concept today. But when you go inwardly by a power of concentration and meditation, you simultaneously, as a parallel movement, also enter into the subtler realms of the world outside, so much so that the outsideness of the world becomes less in proportion to the internal experience that you have in your own self. The more you are physically conscious, the more the world also is external to you. The more you are inwardly conscious, the nearer is the world to you. The inimical world, the so-called unfriendly world, becomes friendly when you enter into the subtler and subtler realms of your own being. And when you reach the divine principle within you, the world does not merely remain as a friend but becomes an inseparable experience of your own. The world ceases to be an outer phenomenon. There will be no world as such. The thing called the world ceases to be the moment you enter into the spiritual principle within you, which is the same as the spiritual principle within the world, which is also the same as the spiritual principle of the universe. It is only here that God, world and the soul become united. This is the liberation that we are ultimately seeking.

So there is much of a message in this religious observance of Makara Sankranti and we shall all, as humble seekers of Truth, do well to contemplate this inner divinity presiding over the solar symbol in our creation and endeavour to be more and more spiritual in our life - which is not to change to a different order or kind of life from the one in which we are, but to enter into a new meaning of life in this very life. To be spiritual, to enter the realm spiritual, is not to enter into an order of life as people mistakenly

imagine. It is not shifting from place to place, moving from one corner of the earth to another corner of the earth, or changing the mode of living in this world. This is not spirituality. What is really meant is to enter one step inward into your life rather than move outwardly, diametrically. It is not a horizontal movement but an inward gesture of the soul towards its own centre.

It is difficult to understand what spirituality is, however much you may read philosophy. Spirituality is not a kind of life that you lead. It is the inner meaning of all kinds of life in the world. It is not isolated from other types of life. It is the meaning and significance behind every kind of life, whatever be your profession or the duties you perform in the world. There are people who imagine that spirituality is for the later period of one's life. It has nothing to do with 'doing'. As I mentioned to you, it is the significance behind what you are and what you do. So you cannot fix it for a period of time - tomorrow or the day after. No such thing is possible in spirituality, because the spiritual is the meaning behind things. How can you fix the meaning to a distant future, as if you do not want to live today? The meaning behind existence and activity is what is meant by the spiritual. If there is any worth in what you are and what you do, that is spirituality.

This is what the Upanishads and other scriptures like the Bhagavadgita speak of. They speak of the interpretation of God in the world - such as the sun whose northern movement commences today, and on account of which we regard this day as auspicious Makara Sankranti. So, you should take all this seriously to your heart on this auspicious day and contemplate for a moment the deeper truths of your own personal lives, the deeper truths of nature outside and the deeper truths implied in the relationship between yourselves and the nature outside. There are three implications, three meanings, three significances or three hidden realities - the one within ourselves, the second in nature outside, and the third which is implied in the relation between ourselves and the nature outside, which is called God, invisible to our physical perception.

Those who are Brahmacharis may do more Gayatri Mantra Japa, which is presided over by the sun, from today onwards. Those who have other Mantras as their Ishta-Mantra may do more Japa of that Mantra from today onwards. Those who are advanced enough to take to pure contemplation and meditation will do well to bring the true God into their lives - not the visible God or the imagined God, but the real God in the sense of what spirituality is - into their own lives as the meaning and the significance behind what anything is and what anything can be in this world. The spiritual reality, finally, is the significance behind what anything is and what anything does, whatever we are and whatever we do - which means to say, there is no life without spirituality because life without spirituality is a misnomer; it is meaningless; it is absurd. This is the kind of life that every individual being has to endeavour to live, and we should utilise this opportunity as another happy occasion to contemplate God in His real nature, thus accelerating the speed of our movement towards Him, approximating ourselves more and more nearer to that Supreme Absolute and making our life blessed by living it practically in our day-to-day existence, and thus also to assist the atmosphere around so that we and all people in the world may become fit for the supreme union with that ideal Godhead, the Absolute. We pray that by this influence which we exert in the world, love, solidarity and peace may prevail everywhere.