

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS SERIES

Saurya Traditions I

Swami Ratnashakti Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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With kind regards, ॐ and prem

Sriani Niranjan

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Swami Ratnashakti Saraswati

Under the Guidance of
Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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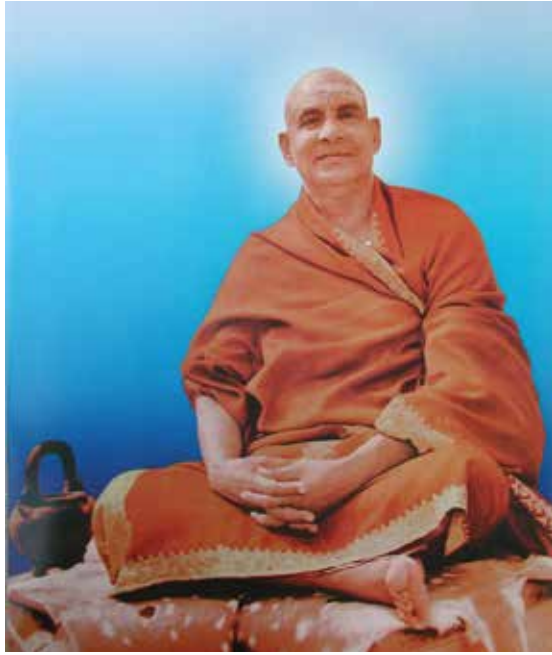
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Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*



Dedication

*To our guru Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati
who continues to inspire and guide us
on our yogic and spiritual journey.*

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Foreword

This year in 2019 at Sannyasa Peeth, the Sankranti anushthana is being conducted as part of our effort to revive the *Surya Siddhanta*, the ancient traditions of sun worship. Since ancient times, Bihar has had a special and unique relationship with Surya. Although the most famous one is Konark, in Odisha, there are many more solar temples in Bihar and the eastern part of the country than anywhere else. It is in Bihar that the ancient traditions have been partially preserved and are still practised even today in the form of Chhath and other *vrats* or observances.

The culture of India is ancient, so ancient that people have forgotten what it actually is. We can say with pride that we are descendants of rishis, but the inheritance given by the ancestors, we no longer know. To revive the ancient traditions, at Sannyasa Peeth, we are looking into the teachings of the rishis. Through the activities of Sannyasa Peeth these teachings are being presented with a modern application in the present context for the betterment of life, society, the environment and the world.

One of the first activities in this effort is to understand Sankranti. Sankranti is the cusp period, the migration of the sun from one zodiac sign to the next. Sankranti is part of *Saurya* or solar tantra, one of the five tantric traditions in India. In modern times, only a fraction of the original form of Saurya tantra survives, either as a set of therapeutic

practices or mantras of protection against obstacles. As a philosophy, a sadhana or a way of life it has become practically extinct. Sankranti is part of this Saurya tantra and was the tradition of Bihar. King Karna of Mahabharata fame was the king of this region. He was known as the son of Surya, and was a practitioner of Saurya and Shakta tantra. Munger has an ancient connection with Karna, as it was at Ganga Darshan that King Karna would distribute gold or *sona* to the citizens of his kingdom. Ganga Darshan is therefore imbued with the vibrations of his worship and connection with Surya.

After 5,500 years Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati came to Ganga Darshan and started distributing the wealth of yoga vidya. In King Karna's time gold had value, and in our time physical health, mental peace and emotional harmony have more value. One of the important scriptures on Surya, the *Chakshu Upanishad*, was written in Bihar and contains mantras which help in the healing of eye problems. There are many aspects to the solar tradition which give the benefits of increased health, vitality, longevity and happiness as a result of activating the solar prana. At Sannyasa Peeth we have commenced our investigation of the solar tantra and traditions and are presenting the teachings in a simple way so all may benefit.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

1

Surya, the Sun God

Salutations and adorations to the Supreme Lord, the primordial power that divided the year into the four seasons. Salutations to Surya, the Sun-God.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

Since the dawn of time, the sun has been venerated as the fountainhead of life, the source and embodiment of truth, justice, healing, wisdom and enlightenment. It is little wonder that the power of the sun, its heat, light and energy has mesmerized and attracted so many different cultures and people. When the sun appears over the horizon, daylight is created. When it disappears below the horizon, night falls and the world is plunged into darkness. Ancient cultures and civilizations saw the sun as a powerful and benevolent force that created and sustained life.

In societies that were primarily agricultural, the dependence on the sun for survival created a deep instinctual connection. The dawning of the sun meant safety, sustenance and the known, whereas nightfall represented danger and the unknown. The sun was the destroyer of foes, fear and misery. The sun was the bringer of light, the controller of time and the witness of all creation, omniscient and omnipresent. Almost all the great civilizations of the past developed philosophical and spiritual traditions that connected the individual with this wondrous celestial body.

Adoration and worship of the sun was one of humankind's earliest and most natural forms of inner expression.

Who has not at one time or another felt our eternal dependence upon the sun and connection to its warmth, light and energy? The despondence felt on a gloomy winter's day and the spontaneous lifting of mood and lightness felt when the sun begins to shine are natural and spontaneous reactions. In spring and summer after the long dismal winter months, beaches, parks and gardens are packed with people absorbing the warmth and energy of the sun. Who can fail to appreciate the magnificence of a beautiful sunset or sunrise? We are all connected to and worship the sun in one way or another.

Over eons this feeling of connection with the sun developed and became intimate and alive. The sun was given a name, his form was described in iconography with images and colour and he became a deity. Different stories, myths, and philosophies developed to explain different aspects of the sun and his influence. These became the basis for the relationship with the sun, creating a deep bond and rapport between the individual and the deity. Different attributes and qualities were identified and associated with the sun. As sunlight falls upon all without distinction, the sun was associated with justice, impartiality and fairness. As light dispels darkness and reveals all, the sun was linked to the ideals of truth, wisdom and spiritual illumination. Rituals and methods of worship evolved to directly connect the individual with the radiance and positivity of the deity, which could then be channelled and take the form of tangible benefits in material and spiritual life.



Sun worship around the world



In ancient Egypt, the sun was honoured as the god Ra, the bringer of light, the conqueror of evil, the symbol of goodness and truth. Ra was the ruler of the heavens. As he drove his chariot through the heavens the sun travelled across the skies.

In ancient Greece, Helios was the sun god; a mighty charioteer, driving his flaming chariot and gleaming horses each day from east to west across the sky. In ancient Rome, the sun was Sol, who later became Sol Invictus, the invincible sun, the Roman

god of the sun and patron of warriors. Sol Invictus rode a chariot drawn by two golden horses and was undefeated in battle. He was hailed as the rising sun who dispels the forces of evil, the invincible conqueror of Rome's enemies, and the companion and guardian deity of the emperor.

In Romano-Celtic Europe the sun god was depicted holding a spoked wheel in one hand and a thunderbolt in the other. He travelled by boat through the underworld at night and was carried across the sky by a horse-drawn chariot or cart during the day. Belenus, or the

shining one, was the ancient Celtic sun god, one of the most widely worshipped Celtic deities. Belenus was shown with horses riding the sky and worshipped with fire festivals, including the Beltane festival, the midsummer bonfire festival held between the spring equinox



and the summer solstice. In the Norse mythology Sol or Sunna is the goddess of the sun, while her brother, Mani, is the god of the moon.

Utu, later known as Shamash, was the name of the sun god in Babylonia and Assyria and his twin sister Inanna, was the goddess of the heavens. Shamash was the dispenser of divine justice and the upholder of truth and morality. Shamash emerged from the doors of heaven every day at dawn and rode across the sky in his chariot. As the light of the sun removes darkness, the omnipresent witness Shamash cast his light of truth and morality upon the earth. Using a double edged arch-shaped saw with large jagged teeth, Shamash dispenses justice. Shamash battled with the forces of darkness at night, re-emerging reborn at dawn in the east, as an eternal symbol of the victory of light over darkness.

To the Persians in central Asia, the ancient god of the sun was Mithra, who also rode his chariot across the sky and was the harbinger of light and the dispenser of justice. Mithra was the shining light that beholds everything and was the witness to oaths, the binder of promises and contracts. He was the god of mutual obligation between the king and his warriors, and so he also became the god of war. In the 3rd and 4th centuries Mithraism was the chief rival to the new and developing religion of Christianity. In the Zoroastrian pantheon the Sun is called Khvar, and is associated with Asha, the energy of fire that sustains cosmic order and movement. To the Chaldeans in ancient Mesopotamia the sun god was Baal.

Amaterasu, meaning the heavenly shining one, is the goddess of the sun in the Shinto religion of Japan, and her brother Susanowo is the god of the moon. In ancient Chinese cosmology there were originally ten suns in the sky, who were all brothers and under the command of the Jade Emperor. In Africa the Tiv people consider the sun to be the son of the supreme being Awondo, and the moon is Awondo's daughter.

Across ancient South and Central America, the worship of the sun was the mainstay of the ruling powers, as well as agricultural and warrior communities. To the Mayans, the daytime sun was Kinich Ahau or the sun-faced lord. At night he took on the qualities of a jaguar and from dusk to dawn he journeyed underneath the earth



from west to east, through the underworld. The ancient Mayans followed the sun and its movements with close attention. Solar and lunar eclipses, known as *chi'bil kin* or the biting of the sun, were charted and predicted. To the Aztecs who as farmers and warriors worshipped the sun for a bountiful harvest and victory over their enemies, he



was Huitzilopochtli, the god of sun and the god of war. To the Andeans, the sun was a male divinity called *Inti* and *Killa*, the moon, was his consort. Worship of the sun was performed three times daily. The *inti ccespimuy* was the sunrise ritual, the midday ritual was called *chawpi-punchao* and sunset was *inti seccaycuy*.

Different places were consecrated for the worship of the sun. Often these sites featured architecture and monoliths aligned to mark the solstices and other points of transit of the sun such as found in the Yucatan of Mexico, the Zikkuruts of Babylon and Chaldea, the temple Kavusan in the Fergana Valley of Central Asia, and also Stonehenge in England. Sun temples were erected for Ra in Egypt, and the pyramids were inscribed



with rituals and instructions to guide the king on his solar journey and eventual rebirth.

The great temple of the Aztecs, the Templo Mayor, was built facing west, where the sun sets and descends into the realms of the dead, only to be reborn again through combat. The Machu Picchu site in Peru has several stones used as guide posts known as *Intihuatana* or the hitching post of the sun, used to tie the sun to prevent it swinging further north resulting in even shorter days. This was used by the Incans



to mark the winter solstice, celebrated with the festival of *Inti Raymi*. Traditional Japanese people would express their reverence for the sun by washing their face and hands and turning towards the rising sun to clap their hands and bow. During the vernal and autumnal equinoxes people danced, chanting prayers at the time of the rising and setting sun.

In the Celtic tradition people sought to invoke the sun through bonfires and set alight wooden wheels at the top of mountains. Solar amulets were attached to armour to ward off harm and protect the wearer. Sun discs and wheel shaped pendants were buried with the dead, perhaps to light their journey to the next world. During the reign of Julian in the Roman Empire (361–363 CE) Mithraism, or the religion of the sun, gained sufficient strength to oust Christianity. Although the Christian Church prohibited the worship of heavenly bodies, many of the dates of religious feasts coincide with dates of the solar calendar. December 25th coincides with the winter solstice and the related agricultural ritual of the ‘sun birth’. The feast of St John the Baptist on 24th June is related to the summer solstice. Easter occurs at the time of the vernal solstice. In Southern France, on the first Sunday in Lent, a solar festival of torches is held. Torches are lit and carried in procession through the towns and countryside to revive the energy of the sun.



SURYA



In India the sun has been revered and worshipped for thousands of years. His temples were known as *aditya grihas*, the house of Aditya or the sun, and are located all over India, some of which date back as far as the 8th century CE. The most famous of these was built at Konark, Odisha, during the 13th century CE. The other main sun temples



are the Martand sun temple near Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir; the temple at Kalpi in Uttar Pradesh, the Deo temple in Aurangabad, Bihar, and the Dakshinaarka temple at Gaya in Bihar. In Assam is the Surya Pahar temple and the Surya Narayana temple is in Arasavalli in Andhra Pradesh. In South India the Surya Narayana Temple is

at Maroli in Karnataka, and the Suryanaar temple is at Thirumangalakudi in Tamil Nadu.

Vedic era

Surya the lord of the Sun, appears in the *Rig Veda* as the creator of the material universe, the source of inexhaustible power and radiance and the sustainer of life. Surya rides in a chariot drawn by radiant, white-footed steeds and illuminates the earth. He stands with golden arms outstretched to the utmost ends of heaven, infusing energy into all creatures. Ushas, the dawn is his wife. As the source of light, Surya was revered not just as a material force, but as the power of life, truth, and wisdom in the material and also the spiritual dimensions. Surya relates not only to the physical organ of sight and the power and ability to see, but also to the awakening of *jnana*, spiritual perception, intuition and wisdom. In the darkness nothing is visible, but light reveals all.



Light removes the ignorance of the unknown and the unseen. From the spiritual perspective it relates to the state of *avidya*, the primordial condition of ignorance that the soul assumes. Through the spiritual sankalpa and sadhana the effort is made to free oneself from the confines of avidya and connect with *vidya*, the knowledge and essence of spiritual reality underlying the material dimension and permeating all of creation.

The power of Surya is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Therefore he is referred to as the eye of other deities, Mitra, Varuna and Agni. Mitra and Varuna are linked to *rita*, the cosmic principles of order and stability that sustain humankind. Agni is the intermediary between the material and spiritual dimensions, indicating that it is the power of Surya that fuels spiritual aspiration, ascertains the sincerity of the sadhana and determines the result. Surya as the supreme Brahman is described in nine aspects: the time, the place, the endeavour, the performer, the instrument, the specific ritual, the scripture, the articles of worship and the result to be achieved.



Functions

Surya is the creator without beginning or end, the lord of the worlds and the lord of the universes. He created the oceans, the continents and the fourteen worlds, and on the banks of the river Chandrasarit he created Prajapati and the different races of beings. After creation, the unmanifest Surya manifested his millions of rays and divided himself into twelve adityas, each possessing garlands of rays. As Surya moves through the constellations in each of the twelve months, it is a different aditya who shines. The vedic solar months were grouped into six according to their nature and qualities. The sweet months are Madhu and Madhava, and these correspond to spring. The bright Shukra and Suci months correspond to summer; the cloudy names of Nabhas and Nabhasya indicate monsoon, and the names Isha and Urja indicate the potency and fertility of the autumn harvest. Sahas and Sahasya indicate the harsh and forceful qualities of winter, while the names Tapas and Tapasya are a reminder of the optimum time for spiritual endeavour, meditation and a more austere life.

Each aditya manifests a specific potency and has a different role and function in the created universe. *Dhata*, meaning to support, creates





Varuna



Indra



Vivasvan

living beings and shines with one thousand and one hundred rays. Also called Prajapati, he is the basis of health and tranquillity. Aryaman has one thousand and three hundred rays and is in the wind, stationed among the Devas. He is the essence of the wind, experienced as the feeling of air on the skin. *Aryaman*, meaning speed or swiftness, is the *vayu tattwa*, or the air element. Mitra is present on the bank of the Chandrasarit river where he performs penance for the welfare of the world and with his one thousand five hundred rays he is the effulgence and attraction of the moon and the oceans. Mitra comes from the Sanskrit root 'mid' meaning love or friendliness, indicating that Surya protects all beings with friendliness. Varuna is the ruler of the *apas tattwa*, the water element, and his abode is in the waters, where his one thousand three hundred rays protect and sanctify all beings. *Varuna* indicates the granting of boons and the fulfilment of wishes. Indra, from the Sanskrit root *idi*, meaning supreme mastery, indicates the ability to rule. Indra is the king of the Devas and he destroys the enemies of the gods with his one thousand and two hundred rays.

Vivasvan of one thousand and four hundred rays is the controller of the *agni tattwa*, the energy lying

within fire that provides heat, warmth, and protection from darkness and foes. Vivasvan is also the agni in the physical body that digests food and sustains life. *Vivasvan* indicates one who resides in all beings. Tvashtha has eleven hundred rays and resides in trees, plants and vegetation. He protects and preserves *aushadi* or medicinal herbs and also *soma* or amrit. The name Tvashtha comes from the Sanskrit root *tusa* meaning happiness or satisfaction. Vishnu, from *vis* meaning that which pervades, indicates the ability to sustain, nurture and preserve the universe. Vishnu with twelve hundred rays incarnates to restore dharma and defeat negativity. Amshuman has fifteen hundred rays and is the controller of air. He is in the swiftness of the wind that delights and captivates all beings. The Sanskrit root *amshu* means pervading and love, and thus Amshuman is said to pervade the entire universe with love.

Surya is worshipped by all, and the brilliance of life emanates from him and returns to him. So he is called Bhaga from the root *bhaja* meaning devotion or worship. Bhaga with one thousand rays is situated in the earth, as well as the bodies of all living beings and is the *prithwi tattwa*, the earth element, that contains all five elements.





Bhaga

Pushan, from the verb root *push* meaning nurturing, gives the clue as to the purpose of his one thousand rays. Pushan makes food and grains grow, sustains all created beings, and leads to the experience of satisfaction and fulfilment in life. *Parjanya*, meaning the great roaring sound is the essence of the clouds. With fourteen hundred rays Parjanya controls the climate and sets forth the rain.



Pushan

Travelling with Surya in each of the twelve months is a different set of six associates, a *rishi* or sage, a *rakshaka* or demon, a *naga* or divine serpent; an *apsara* or celestial dancer; a *gandharva* or celestial musician and a *yaksha* or divine being. They accompany the effulgent sun in a grand procession. While the sages glorify the movement of the sun by chanting the mantras of the *Sama*, *Rig* and *Yajur Vedas* that describe his powers and glory, the *gandharvas* sing his praises and the *apsaras* dance before his chariot. The *nagas* arrange the chariot ropes and the *yakshas* harness the horses to the chariot, while the powerful *raksasas* push from behind. Facing the chariot, the sixty thousand *brahmana* sages known as *Valakhilyas* travel in front and extol the glories of Surya with vedic mantras.



Parjanya

The Twelve Adityas

Aditya	Ruling month	Solar month	Lunar month	Rays
<i>Dhata</i>	Mar–Apr	Madhu	Chaitra	1100
<i>Aryaman</i>	Apr–May	Madhava	Vaishakha	1300
<i>Mitra</i>	May–Jun	Shukra	Jyeshtha	1500
<i>Varuna</i>	Jun–Jul	Suchi	Ashadha	1300
<i>Indra</i>	Jul–Aug	Nabhas	Shravana	1200
<i>Vivasvan</i>	Aug–Sep	Nabhasya	Bhadrapada	1400
<i>Tvashtha</i>	Sep–Oct	Isha	Ashvina	1100
<i>Vishnu</i>	Oct–Nov	Urja	Karttika	1200
<i>Amshuman</i>	Nov–Dec	Sahas	Margasirsha	1500
<i>Bhaga</i>	Dec–Jan	Sahasya	Pushya	1000
<i>Pushan</i>	Jan–Feb	Tapas	Magha	1000
<i>Parjanya</i>	Feb–Mar	Tapasya	Phalguna	1400

Surya Upanishad

The *Surya Upanishad* describes Surya as the *atman* or the soul of the world. He is identical to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and in him resides the knowledge of the four Vedas. Surya is that which moves and does not move. He is the source of water and the rains that sustain the earth. He is the source of food and fuel for the yajna. By his radiance all creatures are born and unto him do all creatures return ultimately.

At the macrocosmic level Surya is the manifested form of Brahman, the ultimate truth and reality. It is Surya that gives birth to *prakriti* or the manifest world, through *vayu* or air, *bhumi* or earth, *apas* or water and *jyoti*, the fire element. Surya creates the sky, the directions and also the devas, indicating that he creates and governs the subtle and celestial realms also. Finally, Surya creates the Vedas, signifying that he

governs *vidya* or knowledge. These are the three aspects of Surya at the macrocosmic level. The first relates to prakriti and the material realm and dimension of existence. The second relates to the realm of *tejas*, the subtle realm of existence accessed through energy, radiance and heat. The final level relates to the attainment of omniscience that connects one with *paravidya*, the transcendental knowledge.

In the microcosmic aspect, the same powers, functions and capacities of Surya exist and these are also explained in the Upanishad. As the creator of the individual being, Surya governs the *jiva* or individual soul. Surya is the power behind the *antahkarana*, the inner cause of individual existence, comprised of *manas*, the mind, *chitta*, the memory, *buddhi*, the intellect and *ahamkara*, the ego. Surya is the *pancha prana*, the five pranas: prana, apana, samana, vyana and udhyana. It is Surya who is the manifested principle behind all the five *jnanendriyas* or sense organs and the five *karmendriyas* or motor organs. Ultimately Surya is also the states of *ananda* bliss, *jnana* knowledge and *vijnana* wisdom that can be attained by the sadhaka. In *surya upasana*, or sun worship, the awakening of *jnana* that destroys avidya, ignorance, and connects one to *paravidya* is the ultimate attainment.

The Upanishad reveals the mantra *Om Ghrini Surya Adityaya* to be used in *surya upasana*. Brahma is the source of the mantra, the *chandha* or poetic meter is Gayatri, the deity is Aditya and Narayana is the *bija* or seed. This mantra promotes the attainment of the four *purusharthas* or worthy goals: *artha* or prosperity, *kama* or pleasure and emotional satisfaction, *dharma* or righteousness and means of life, and *moksha* or liberation. The *Om* is Brahman, the single syllable. *Ghrini* and *Surya* are the two syllable mantras, while *Aditya* is three syllables. Together they make the eight syllable *Atharvaangiras Surya* mantra. The upasana of *surya* is performed by reciting the mantra three times daily, at sunrise, at midday and at sunset. By perfecting this mantra, the sadhaka overcomes negativity, learns what is important and transcends *samsara*, or worldly bondage.



He who dwells in the sun, whom the sun does not know, whose body the sun is, and by whose power the sun shines – He is the Supreme Self, the Indweller, the immortal Essence. Tat Twam Asi – ‘That thou art’. Realize this and be free here and now.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

Puranic era

In the puranic literature numerous references to Surya are given along with explanations of methods of invocation and worship. Surya is described as the son of Kashyapa, a vedic sage, and Aditi, mother of the Gods. In other explanations he is the offspring of Dyaus or the Sky. Surya married Saranyu also known as Samjna, who is the goddess of clouds. Born from their relationship were Manu, the first man, Shani or Saturn, Yama, lord of the dead, and Yami, his sister who became the goddess of the Yamuna river; Revanta, the chief of the Guhyakas; and twin sons, the youthful Ashwins, who travel before his chariot in their own golden version or on horseback.



Surya travels across the sky riding a chariot that moves on a single wheel, having five spokes and three axles. The three axles of the wheel are the three divisions of time: past, present and future. The five spokes and the rim of the wheel represent the seasons. The chariot is harnessed by seven horses. These represent the seven colours of visible light and the seven days in a week. The horses are named after the seven meters of Sanskrit: Gayatri, Brihati, Ushnih, Jagati, Trishtubha, Anushtubha and Pankti. They also symbolize the seven faculties governed by the sun.

1. Prakriti the primeval element through which creation takes place constituted by the five gross elements, pancha mahabhoota, and the five subtle elements, pancha tanmatra. This indicates that through surya upasana one can understand and experience the original, primordial power.
2. The antahkarana or four aspects of the mind: manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara. This signifies a process of *swadhyaya*, or self-analysis and *sanyam*, or restraint is needed for the sadhaka to ultimately experience the unfolding of awareness and spiritual awakening in the subtle and causal states of consciousness. For this to

take place the different dimensions of mind have to be purified and harmonized.

3. The karmendriyas, the senses of action, and the jñanendriyas, the senses of cognition. Karmendriyas are the medium for work, drive and action, while jñanendriyas generate prana in life and awaken jñana.

These seven faculties are represented by the seven horses, which pull the chariot of life in time and in space. The two reins by which the horses are controlled represent *uttarayana*, the northward path of the sun, and *dakshinayana*, its southward path. The rays of the sun increase in the northern direction and decrease in the southern direction. The sun's journey in the northern direction indicates moksha, liberation from sorrow and suffering, while its passage towards the south indicates rebirth and bondage. Those who are able to control the moment of their death wait for the sun to become northbound before leaving their body to attain moksha. Those who want to return to this dimension leave their body during dakshinayana.

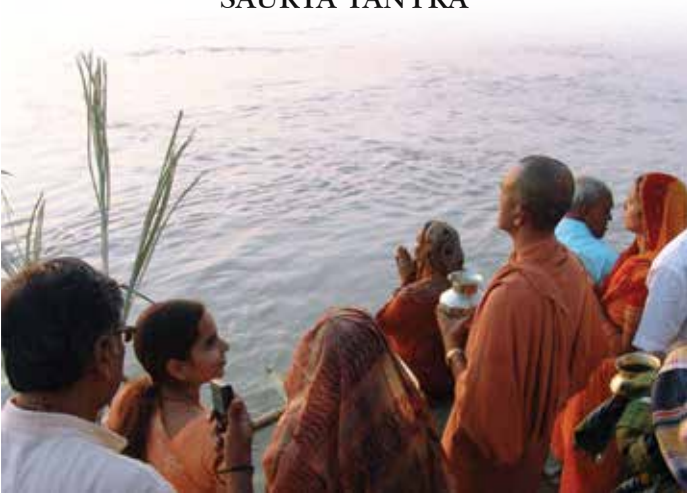
The charioteer of Surya is Aruna. Aruna was the son of the great sage Kashyapa and Vinata, a daughter of Daksha. His mother had obtained a boon from her husband that she would have two offsprings whose glory would surpass the thousand serpent sons of her sister Kadru. She gave birth to two eggs, which did not hatch for a long time. In her impatience, she broke open one of them and found Aruna inside it, but as he was premature, his lower body was undeveloped. He cursed his mother for her impatience, and took to the skies. Brahma placed Aruna in front of Surya, as his charioteer. Aruna is red in colour, representing the sunlight at dawn and dusk. He represents the *jīva*, the individual soul. His absence of legs illustrates that the individual soul is only a witness and not a performer of actions. It can observe the powers that move it through life, but it cannot move and become active. Two females on either side of Aruna represent the dawn goddesses Usha and Pratyusha. The goddesses are shooting arrows, symbolizing their challenge of darkness.



The message of the sun is the message of light, the message of unity, of impartiality, of true selflessness, of the perfection of the elements of karma yoga. The sun shines on all equally. It is the true benefactor of all beings. Without the sun, life would perish on earth. It is extremely regular and punctual in its duties, and never claims a reward or craves for recognition. If you imbibe these virtues of the sun, what doubt is there that you will shine with equal divine lustre!

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

SAURYA TANTRA



Tantras are not only spiritual or philosophical ideas and practice, they are also scientific procedures which when followed bring health, vitality, stamina and they change life as well. In Bihar certain aspects of sun worship are still practised, most the important one being Chhath, in the month of October. Although society considers these practices to be religious due to the lack of understanding, they exist in tradition much before any religions came into force and they were part of lifestyle and routines.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Tantra is essentially a practical science and way of life that connects the individual consciousness with the spiritual dimension. Ancient civilizations revered the sun as the giver of life, light, safety and warmth. Over time this connection to the light as the source of positive energy became a spiritual aspiration. Systems of *aradhana* or worship developed and came to be known as Saurya tantra. They established a deep psychic connection between the celestial body and the individual as well as practical methods to align oneself gradually with the luminosity and radiance of the sun. The



routine of daily life was illuminated by the philosophy of Saurya tantra, which showed one how to live and with what attitude one should experience life. The system of practices that generated different experiences of oneself were the science of Saurya tantra. Anybody in any station or walk of life could practise, in the manner appropriate to their capacity and aspiration. This magnanimity of approach is reflected in the three levels of Saurya tantra, whereby the sadhaka strives to connect with the solar energy at the material, subtle or transcendental levels.

Material aspect of Saurya tantra

In the material dimension the sun is the luminous orb in the sky, creating and supporting life by providing light and radiance. When direct solar radiation is not blocked by clouds it is experienced as sunshine, a combination of visible light and radiant heat. When blocked by clouds or other objects it is experienced as diffused light. The light we experience on earth is just a tiny portion of the immense electromagnetic radiation of the sun, and is comprised of ultraviolet light, visible light and infrared light. Invisible to most humans, ultraviolet light is electromagnetic radiation

of a shorter wavelength. Visible light is the spectrum visible to the human eye and responsible for the sense of sight. Infrared light is of longer wavelengths not visible to the human eye. Each of these has a specific function, purpose and influence on the human body, the environment, the planet and the created universe.

Arogya vrat

The physical aspect of Saurya tantra creates an alignment between the individual and the radiance of the sun and utilizes that electromagnetic radiance for health, vitality, stamina and prosperity. At this level the arogya vrat is the predominant concept and focus. *Arogya* means health, and *vrat* is the observance, practice and discipline undertaken in order to promote health, remove disease and restore physical vitality. Physical health and vitality is the basic and fundamental requirement not only for material life, but also for spiritual sadhana and evolution. The body and mind are the vehicles through which sadhana is performed and the spiritual dimensions of experience are accessed. If the body is weak, debilitated and diseased, or the mind is sick, unhappy, confused and depressed, then higher sadhanas are not possible. Spiritual life requires a healthy vital body and a clear, strong and balanced mind. Without this there is no *sankalpa shakti*, or willpower and any real spiritual progress will be very difficult.

It said that the correct performance of these arogya vrat techniques will remove disease and bring about a state of good health. The arogya vrat is particularly indicated as a remedy for the following conditions: leprosy, skin conditions, boils, impurities in blood, colic, gout, fever, consumption, and diseases of the womb. The arogya vrat encourages the proper functioning of the physiological systems, generates physical vitality and increases stamina. Mental health and happiness are also influenced. It is said that those who practise arogya vrat and remember the sun as the illuminator of the worlds will attain happiness and freedom from misery.

Positive effects of exposure to the sun

Modern scientific and medical research substantiates these ancient statements. The primary source of Vitamin D is moderate exposure of the skin to sunshine. Vitamin D is crucial for the maintenance of both physical and mental health. It protects against inflammation, lowers high blood pressure, helps strengthen and promote bone health by regulating vital calcium levels, and promotes muscle growth. It may also lower the risk of contracting breast and colon cancer. Vitamin D plays an important role in the maintenance of a healthy immune system and sufficient levels reduce the risk of infectious disease. Vitamin D turns on key peptides in the immune system that trigger a strong anti-microbial response, allowing the body to quickly and effectively fight off disease and infection. Deficiency in vitamin D is associated with increased autoimmunity as well as an increased susceptibility to infection and is linked to multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes mellitus and inflammatory bowel disease.

Vitamin D also plays a crucial role in brain development, brain function regulation, and a healthy nervous system. It helps spur nerve cell growth in the hippocampus, which is the part of the brain responsible for forming, organizing and storing memories. Deficiency has been found to be common in patients with Parkinsons disease, Alzheimers disease, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, dementia, multiple sclerosis, seasonal disorders and depression. While available in some foods, the best way to ensure adequate vitamin D in the body is 15 to 20 minutes' exposure to sunlight, which is approximately the time of the ancient practice of arghya.

Moderate exposure to ultraviolet light has been found to help skin conditions like acne, psoriasis, eczema, jaundice and other fungal skin infections. Psoriasis is caused when the skin sheds its cells too quickly and develops inflamed or aggravated patches. Exposure to sunlight slows the growth of the skin cells and relieves the symptoms. The properties of sunlight make it useful in disinfecting and sterilizing.



Sunlight effectively kills micro-organisms such as bacteria and viruses. The ultraviolet rays penetrate the membrane of the cells and destroy the DNA, preventing the bacteria from replicating and multiplying.

On sunny days the brain produces more serotonin, the mood lifting chemical, than on darker days. The light-induced effects of serotonin are triggered by sunlight that goes in through the eye. Sunlight cues special areas in the retina, which triggers the release of serotonin stimulating feelings of happiness and positivity. Nitric oxide, a chemical stored in the outermost layers of the skin, also reacts to the sun's ultraviolet rays by widening the blood vessels. This stimulates up to 60 percent of the blood to flow to the skin capillaries where they absorb this energy and infrared radiation. The ultraviolet radiation helps kill any infections in the blood while the infrared recharges the cells with vitality. As a result, blood pressure drops, heart rate slows, and one feels more relaxed and happy. This improvement in blood flow in turn generates better mental performance. Ultraviolet light also stimulates epidermal cells known as keratinocytes to make beta-endorphins, which also have

a mood-boosting effect. From feelings of happiness come confidence, creativity, a sense of connectedness, belonging and appreciation. Enhancement of these positive emotions is what the scriptures refer to as becoming free from misery through the practice of arogya vrat.

Proper exposure to sunlight is vital in maintaining a normal circadian rhythm. The circadian rhythm controls a complex of interlinked physical, mental and behavioural changes that follow a 24-hour cycle and respond to the light and darkness in the body's environment. It creates the feeling of tiredness and governs corresponding sleeping patterns and the production of melatonin. Other physiological changes that occur according to a circadian rhythm include heart rate and many cellular processes, including oxidative stress, cell metabolism, immune and inflammatory responses. The human eye contains photosensitive cells in its retina with connections directly to the pituitary gland in the brain. Stimulation of these important cells comes from sunlight, in particular, the blue unseen spectrum. These cells also directly affect the brain's hypothalamus region, which controls our biological clock. The most effective way to regulate the circadian rhythms is simply to expose your eyes to the sunlight. Before 9 am and after 5 pm, it is important to spend 30 to 60 minutes in natural light every day, especially in the winter time.

The discoveries of modern science demonstrate the impact of the sun on individual physical and mental health. The simple act of spending 30 minutes in the early morning sunshine has a profound effect on body and mind, and the arogya vrat practices are a way to attune ourselves to the cosmic nature and revitalize our lives. If practised regularly, either once a week on Sundays, or once a month on the Sankranti, the arogya vrat connects one with the power of the sun as a regular and consistent benevolent force which supports and realigns the natural inherent body rhythms, allowing healing to take place.

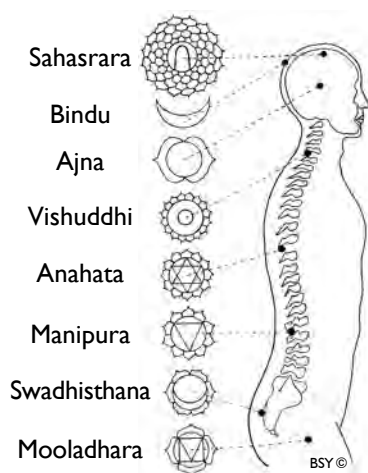
Subtle dimension

At the physical level, the practices of Saurya tantra utilized the energy of the sun to alleviate disease and promote physical and mental health. These were simple practices that ensured the appropriate exposure to the rays of the sun at the most beneficial time. The aspects of *shuddhi*, or purification, *pratyahara* or sensory withdrawal, and *dharana* or concentration were combined to harness the healing energy and create the potential for positive transformation at the physical and mental levels. In the subtle dimension of Saurya tantra, the same principles apply, but it is the *sukshma* or subtle, energy of the sun that is harnessed and directed into the *pranamaya kosha*, the body of prana that exists in every individual.

Prana

Prana is the force that sustains not only the body, but also creation at every level. It is a multidimensional energy: a combination of electrical, magnetic, electromagnetic, photonic, ocular, thermal and mental energies. The ancient practitioners of Saurya tantra utilized the electromagnetic





radiation of the sun to access, activate and harness this field of pranic energy within the body and mind. In the pranamaya kosha prana flows through *nadis*, energy channels, and is stored in *chakras*, energy vortices. The word nadi means ‘flow’. In Saurya tantra, the nadis are equated to the rays of the sun, subtle flows of energy that underlie and sustain life and consciousness. Thousands of

different rays have been identified, but seven are said to be auspicious and great including pingala and sushumna.

The vital energy that flows through these rays concentrates at particular centres, which have different potencies. These centres of energy are the chakras from mooladhara to ajna. From the Saurya tantra perspective two chakras are the most important, manipura and ajna. Manipura chakra is situated at the navel, the approximate centre of gravity of the body. *Manipura* means jewelled city and in the physical body it is linked to the solar plexus, which is a bundle of nerves, fanning out from a central plexus, like the rays of the sun. This centre is associated with heat, vitality, dynamism, generation and preservation. As the sun radiates light and energy, so manipura radiates and distributes pranic energy



throughout the body, regulating and fuelling life’s processes. The solar plexus is governed by the sympathetic nervous system, pingala nadi, and is responsible for the digestion and assimilation of nutrients. The solar energy is used to activate and awaken manipura, the storehouse of prana.

Ajna chakra

Ajna chakra is the point of confluence where the three rays of light or prana, ida, pingala and sushumna, merge into one stream of consciousness. When that merger takes place a complete transformation of the consciousness occurs and duality is transcended. Ajna chakra is located at the top of the spinal column and in the physical body it relates to the pineal gland. The trigger point for ajna is known as *bhrumadhya*, located at the eyebrow centre. Saurya tantra practices involve generating a vision of light at ajna or *bhrumadhya*, or in *chidakasha*, the space of consciousness. Once the vision of light is established, the practitioner is able to jump over the confines of sensory experience and enter the psychic and spiritual dimensions.



Modern scientific research has highlighted the direct effect of sunlight on the pineal gland. Regular exposure to sunlight stimulates the pineal gland to produce more serotonin. Serotonin has the potential to be converted into chemicals called tryptamines. These create the chemical basis for profound changes in sensory perception, mood and thought, including visions and hallucinations. Found naturally in botanicals such as magic mushrooms and ayahuasca, tryptamines are created by the pineal gland when stimulated through various yogic and tantric practices. The practices of Saurya tantra access the subtle essence of the sense of sight, through visualization, *dharana*, and *dhyana* to awaken the subtle pranic body and activate ajna chakra.

Ajna chakra is the astral and psychic realm characterized by extraordinary powers of perception, intuition, and influence. Ajna chakra is called the third eye, the *divya chakshu*, the divine eye, *jnana chakra*, or *jnana netra*, the eye of knowledge because it is the channel through



Surya

which spiritual understanding, intuition and wisdom dawns. For this reason, ajna chakra is said to be governed by Jupiter, or Brihaspati, the guru of the devas. However, Surya is the universal guru who opens the way to the ultimate transcendental knowledge, beyond duality and beyond avidya revealing the shining light of truth, auspiciousness and bliss, *sat-chid-ananda*. This is the realization that dawns through Saurya tantra. There is a direct relationship between the role of Jupiter, Surya and the guru, and thus a debilitated sun in the astrological chart of an individual can be rectified by Jupiter. This transformation happens when the relationship and connection with the guru in human form is sincere and founded on practice of the guru mantra and adherence to the directions given by the guru.



Brihaspati (Guru)

Transcendental dimension

The transcendental aspect of Saurya tantra links the individual with the cosmic experience of Surya existing at the manifest and unmanifest levels. At the manifest level Surya is the cosmic prana and the unlimited power and effulgence of that energy. Even the devas obtained their abilities from the solar rays symbolizing the awakened cosmic prana. When Saranyu was unable to bear the radiance of her husband Surya, her father, Vishwakarma, was greatly distressed. He offered to trim some of the rays, and reduce Surya's brilliance. Surya agreed to this and from these blazing fragments of light Vishvakarma fashioned the different weapons of the gods, including the discus of Vishnu, the trident of Shiva, Kubera's mace, and Kartikeya's lance.

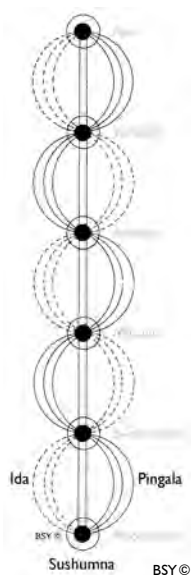
Bindu and sahasrara

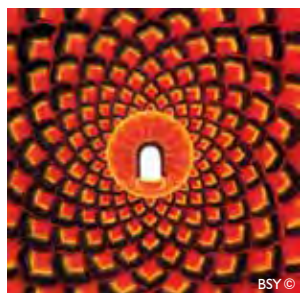
The unmanifest Surya is that which exists beyond the beginning and the end of time and creation. Then he is known as *Hiranyagarbha*, the golden womb of potentiality into which everything dissolves at the end of time. For the sadhaka, ajna chakra is the key to this experience as it is the gateway to sahasrara chakra, the crown of expanded and transcendental awareness. It is at ajna chakra that sushumna becomes active. Ida and pingala, the twin currents of energy, are intertwined along sushumna, but until awakened sushumna remains inert. The scriptures mention sushumna as the ray of the sun that sustains the moon and allows it to become full. The moon signifies bindu, the point from which all things manifest



and into which they return. Bindu is the cause of creation in the macrocosm and microcosm both. In tantric scriptures bindu is indicated as a crescent moon and a drop of white nectar. When the immense force of sushumna is released, the moon becomes full. The moon does not have its own light; it reflects the light of the sun. Similarly, in Saurya tantra bindu is illuminated by the ray of solar energy or prana that is sushumna. Once bindu is saturated with prana, it becomes like the full moon, and the reflected energy of the moon opens the way to sahasara.

Sahasrara is not a chakra, it is an experience of a different dimension. *Sahasrara* means one thousand, and according to Saurya tantra it is the thousand rays of solar illumination that are experienced in this transcendental state of awareness. This is the dimension known as the





surya mandala where only light and knowledge exist. This is the highest state of consciousness where one experiences the divine. It is here that individuality begins and ends. It is said in the scriptures that at the time of creation the entire universe evolved from Surya, and at the time of dissolution the manifest

world reverts back and is dissolved into the sun. The same is true for the individual consciousness. Within the experience of sahasara is the juncture where the individual consciousness can merge with the divine. Yogis who have attained the dimension of sahasara choose whether to remain within the individual consciousness or merge with the ultimate. This is the merging of cosmic consciousness with cosmic prana.

This process is beautifully explained in the Saurya tantra texts. Just as birds flock to the branches of trees, sages, yogis and enlightened beings abandon their physical bodies, assume a subtle form of energy and retire to the mass of effulgence that is the sun. This describes the process of entering into the mandala of light, symbolizing the awakening of jnana and the total spiritual illumination of the individual. One becomes knowledge, one becomes light. Vedavyasa, Sukadev, Janaka, and the Valakhilyas are among the sages who have awakened their prana, and in this experience of illumination entered the cosmic mandala of the sun.



2

Sankranti – Customs and Traditions

The tradition, lifestyle, philosophy and practices of Saurya tantra and upasana are mostly lost today but some isolated aspects like the arogya vrat have continued. In Bihar there remains a strong connection with the worship of Surya which traces its history back to the origin of the Gayatri mantra. The seer of the Gayatri mantra is Rishi Vishwamitra, whose ashram, *Siddhashram*, was situated in modern-day Buxar in Bihar. Sage Vasishtha advised Rishi Vishwamitra to worship Surya in order to establish himself in the highest spiritual identity of a brahmarishi. He followed the disciplines defined in the Saurya tantras to invoke the shakti, the grace and the blessings of the sun. In his ashram in Bihar, he performed this tapasya and in the deepest states of meditation, the Gayatri mantra was revealed to him.

Vishwamitra then propagated this mantra to his disciples and to spiritual aspirants. His ashram became the *peeth* or the seat from which the Gayatri mantra, along with the sadhanas and methods of using the mantra, evolved and spread. The Gayatri mantra, invoking the shakti of Surya in the three different dimensions, eventually became a key *vidhi* or practice in both tantric and vedic sadhanas. In the full form of the sandhya upasana, Gayatri is invoked not only as a mantra but also as devi. The mantra is placed in the different parts of the body through the practice of nyasa and the devi is stationed in the heart as a luminous force,

illuminating the heart space and removing the darkness of ignorance.

Vishwamitra was also the guru of Rama and Lakshman. By virtue of his sadhana, Vishwamitra mastered the different aspects of the cosmic solar energy known as *astras*. It was in his ashram in Bihar that he imparted the vidya of the *devastras* or celestial weaponry, *bala* and *adi bala*, to Rama and Lakshman.

In the *Mahabharata*, Surya is proclaimed as being the eye of the universe and the origin of all life. Attaining the state of Surya is the ultimate realization and liberation, the final goal of the Samkhyans and yogis. Karna of the *Mahabharata* was the son of Surya and Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas. Created through the invocation of mantra, he was born with radiant armour and earrings, a manifestation of illumined prana. The armour symbolizes awakened prana shakti which encases the body within a sheet of high vibratory energy which cannot be penetrated by negativity. Awakened prana shakti also facilitates the development of the faculty of subtle hearing. The ability to perceive the *anahata nada*, unstruck sound, the non-sensory vibrations realized in the deepest states of meditation, is symbolized by the earrings worn by Karna. Karna used to perform the sandhya upasana daily and during this upasana he could intuitively communicate with the sun, his father.

The kingdom of Karna was in Angadesh, the capital of which is modern-day Bhagalpur in Bihar. As a ruler of Anga, Karna was renowned not only for his prowess as an archer and warrior, for his tapasya and sadhana but also for his generosity. Inheriting the qualities of his father, the sun, who shines his light on everyone and everything, Karna gave indiscriminately to all and one, irrespective of caste or creed. Karna had imbibed the qualities of his father and the solar radiance which shone from him was manifest in his performance of daan. Karna was imbued with the real spirit of generosity which is based on a deeper understanding of life. Karna understood that just as he had suffered in life, so

too other people suffer and are in need. He felt compassion and empathy for strangers as if they were his own near and dear ones. No one was sent away empty-handed. His perfection of the sadhana of daan earned him the name *Daanvir*, the hero of generosity.

As part of his Surya upasana, Karna worshipped the eyes of Devi in Chandisthan, an awakened place of Shakti worship, located in present-day Munger, Bihar. Eyes are related to solar energy. Without light form cannot be seen



and the organ that perceives form are the eyes. The light of the eyes, vision and sight are symbolic of the energy of the sun. Karna performed his sadhanas and worship at Chandisthan and as part of this worship, he would sacrifice his body. Pleased with his sadhana, Devi would revive him and give him an amount of gold equivalent to his body weight. This was never kept for personal use. Instead Karna would distribute the gold to his subjects from a platform called Karna Chaura, which is today the seat of the Akhand Jyoti within the campus of Ganga Darshan in Munger.



Mayurbhatta, a 7th century Sanskrit poet and scholar, who lived in the court of Harshavardhana, was afflicted with leprosy. At the Deo temple in present-day Aurangabad he performed surya upasana with the *Surya Satakam* or one hundred verses in praise of Surya that he had composed himself. As a result of his sadhana he was cured of his leprosy. It is the different aspects of the arogya vrat that have survived and are most commonly practised today in Bihar, including Chhath pooja. The most important festival in Bihar, Chhath is performed on Kartika Shukla Shashthi, the sixth day in Shukla paksh, the bright fortnight of the month of Kartika. This usually falls in the month of October or November. The vrat is observed over a period of four days during which time the family members of the person observing the vrat also abstain from taking non-vegetarian food, alcohol and exclude onion and garlic from their diet.

Those performing the vrat pray for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of their family. Once a family member commences this vrat, it is their compulsory duty to perform Chhath pooja every year and to pass it on to the following generations. This vrat is skipped only if the death of a person or birth of a child occurs in the family that year. If the person stops performing Chhath on any particular year, the vrat stops permanently and cannot be resumed in the family. Once started, it cannot be stopped and once stopped, it cannot be restarted. Shuddhi is emphasized throughout



the vrat, not only of the individual body, mind and emotions, but also of the tattwas. This is attained by ensuring the purity of food, water and environment and maintaining *mouna* or silence when eating. On the final day, arghya is performed and prasad is offered to the sun. Both the rising and the setting sun are worshipped during Chhath. The rules must be followed strictly as it is said that not observing the rules brings more adverse effects than the gain which the pooja provides if any of the smallest rules is broken.

Reviving the tradition



From ancient times, Sankranti and Chhath, two rituals associated with the Saurya tantras have been performed in Bihar. Karna, the son of Surya, was the King of Angadesh. Karna performed his, upasana and aradhana of Surya here in Bihar and being the son of Surya, he perfected these sadhanas and gained siddhis in his worship. Surya upasana and aradhana is an ancient tradition of Bihar, and for that reason during the inaugural year of Sannyasa Peeth I have taken the decision to conduct Surya aradhana and perform the ancient rituals of Sankranti. According to our scriptures, daan is the most important component and different items have been identified for each Sankranti.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati.



Panchagni is the highest practice prescribed in Saurya tantra, in the same way that in the yogic literature people consider kriya yoga and kundalini yoga to be the highest sadhana. It involves performing japa and meditation while sitting amidst four fires with the blazing sun overhead as the fifth fire. Swami Satyananda performed this particular sadhana for ten years, from 14th January to 16th June each year, the hottest period of the year, when the sun is north-bound. Following the mandate of his guru, Swami Niranjanananda also performed this arduous tapasya in Munger for five years. His sadhana also commenced each year on 14th January, the day of Makar Sankranti. Following the completion of his panchagni sadhana, Swami Niranjanananda announced that the ancient invocations of the sun that were traditionally observed on each Sankranti would be performed at Sannyasa Peeth Paduka Darshan in 2019.

At Paduka Darshan, the Sankranti program begins with the abhishek of Lord Mrityunjaya in the form of Satyam-eshwar Mahadev. The grace and blessings of Lord Shiva are invoked through the mantras and the offerings of the abhishek. The aradhana of Lord Surya begins with the

Surya Sahasranama havan, the one thousand names of Surya and the chanting of *Surya Ashtakam*. Under the guidance of Swami Niranjanananda, the chanting of different mantras used in the arogya vrats of Saurya tantra, as well as the ashtakshari mantra of the *Surya Upanishad* is done. Through these ancient mantras the power, energy, benevolence and healing force of the sun is invoked and channelled for the benefit of all. The vibration of the mantras influences the pranamaya kosha of the aspirant, bringing the individual into alignment with the cosmic prana, the support and source of life.

For the benefit of all attending, the Satyanarayana vrat, traditionally performed on Sankranti, is also conducted. The vrat includes the *katha* or stories of Lord Narayana which bring joy, inspiration and devotion to the listener. The *katha* is a boon for humankind, a reservoir of spiritual instruction and insight into the development of faith, sincerity, simplicity, surrender and the one-pointedness of mind that are essential for spiritual life. A havan to invoke the grace and benediction of Sri Laskhmi and Narayana is performed at the conclusion of the Satyanarayana Katha.





The Satyanarayana Katha is the most ancient form of ritual, which predates temples and mosques and was followed in every home. First it is an invocation. After the invocation the second part is the telling of the stories of Lord Narayana, and the whole household used to listen to those stories. After the stories there was always the distribution of Prasad for all. This is one of the most ancient and traditional rituals still existing today and it is the invocation of Satyanarayana which inspires people to follow the path of truth. In houses where this Satyanarayana Katha is conducted, the people who live there find it very difficult to speak a lie. They are truthful by nature.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Daan

After the invocation of the divine in the form of Shiva, Surya, Lakshmi and Narayana, the Sankranti program concludes with daan. *Daan* is a system and science of giving that is founded on spiritual, dharmic, scientific and practical precepts and reasoning. Through the activities and programs of Sannyasa Peeth, Swami Niranjanananda is reviving the parampara of daan, according to the traditional and scriptural wisdom. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Sri Krishna explains the importance of daan that is sattwic. (17:20):

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।

देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥

Dātavyamiti yaddānaṃ dīyate'nupakāriṇe;

Deśe kāle cha pātre cha taddānaṃ sātṭvikam smṛtam.

That gift which is given to one who does nothing in return, knowing it to be a duty to give in a fit place and time to a worthy person, that gift is held to be sattwic. (17:20)

Sattwa is the state and experience of purity, wisdom and effulgence. In order for daan to be considered sattwic, all the different aspects involved must reflect that purity. The person giving has to be selfless, without any personal motive.



They give, simply because it is the right thing to do, without any anticipation or expectation of reward. They do not boast of their generosity, nor do they become egotistical in identifying with the good that has been done. The recipient should also reflect purity, wisdom and effulgence, through their nature and conduct. While this includes people who have knowledge of the scriptures, it also means those who live according to dharma, those who live simply, and are in need. The relationship between donor and recipient will be one of respect, honour and compassion. The place of daan should be sacred, at tirthas such as Varanasi and Gaya, but also places of tapasya and sadhana, or where the light of spiritual endeavour and goodness dwells. Along with place, the time of daan is also important.

At Sannyasa Peeth, beside the sacred river Ganga, daan is given on the Sankranti day, during the most auspicious time. Each month, different groups are called from the local community to receive the Sankranti daan. These groups of people represent the sections of society that are easily ignored and forgotten. Yet at Sannyasa Peeth all are welcomed, greeted with namaskar and honoured with daan, from coolies to rickshaw drivers, thelawalas, farmers, fishermen and those that have nothing at all. According to the ancient scriptural references, the items most auspicious to each Sankranti are given. The daan given on the Sankranti day is aligned with the cosmic solar prana. The



sankalpa made at the time of giving is strengthened and its power intensified by the grace of Surya. That is why it is said that the merit of daan on Sankranti is eternal and imperishable. At Sannyasa Peeth it is the sankalpa of Sri Swami Satyananda that is the spiritual force illuminating every action of daan, for peace, plenty and prosperity of all.



Today on Meena Sankranti, we give prasad to our people from the Munger town, who work very hard. They carry the load of all those people who can't carry their own load. They carry the body of all those people who cannot carry their own bodies, who are looking for some help. These people are the rickshawalas and the thelawalas of Munger. Every Sankranti we call different groups and give them daan. Daan is the gift which removes the absence or the vacuum from life. It is not charity. Daan given on this day has a definite purpose and meaning and is endowed with a different positive sankalpa to bring peace, plenty and prosperity to the life of everyone. It is the sankalpa of our Gurudev Sri Swami Satyanandaji also. It is my pleasure and honour to welcome the hard workers of Munger and today they will receive their daan, with the blessings of Sankranti, to make their life full of light, peace and prosperity.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

SANKRANTI

The word *sankranti* is comprised of two words, *san* meaning good and *kranti* which comes from *kraman* meaning movement or transition. Sankranti is the positive transition that occurs when the Sun moves from one *rashi* or constellation of the zodiac to another. The sun appears to revolve once a year along the path called the ecliptic. The ecliptic is not noticeable from the earth because of the rotation of the earth and the daily cycles of sunrise and sunset. This rotation obscures the apparent motion of the sun against the background of the fixed stars in the celestial sphere.

According to *jyotish shashtra* or astrology the Sankranti is conceptualized as being 60 yojana wide and long. A yojana is an ancient measure of distance used in vedic India, and equates to approximately 12 km or 15 km, depending on the scriptural reference. The 432 km wide and long figure of a man has one face, a long nose, wide lips and nine arms holding a coconut in one hand. He moves in a forward direction but keeps looking backwards, and is constantly revolving. Each Sankranti will have certain characteristics based on the *panchang*, the calendar and astrological calculation. These characteristics of the Sankranti are indications of the coming events in the month ahead.

Natural cycles of life

Sankranti is a period, the transition from one sign into the other which in Saurya tantra is considered very important, as the influence on human psyche changes, as sun transits from one sign into the other. Light plays a very vital role in the body, exposure to sun plays a very vital role for the body, and following certain disciplines on specific days also brings in health and removes disease.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

During the Sankranti the forces of continuity and order, as well as the power of transition involved with leaving one condition or state and moving into another are honoured. Without constancy, order and stability there would be no life. Likewise, without the seasonal ebb and flow, without the natural rhythms of change and without transformation, there would be no evolution. Sankranti is that time of auspiciousness when both of these attributes are experienced and understood. The purpose of life is to manifest spiritual awareness and evolve. The process of developing spiritual awareness is the process of change and transformation. However, this is not possible unless there is a proper foundation. That foundation is created by balance and harmony in the physical, mental, emotional and psychic dimensions. If the foundation is secure, the moment of Sankranti presents the optimal conditions to propel the aspirant into a higher level of awareness and experience.

Sankranti relates intrinsically to nature and the environment, and the importance of maintaining balance and harmony. The transition of the seasons used to control what would be harvested and reaped from the planet. As hunter and gatherers, the human species took what the earth offered according to the seasons. During the agricultural period humans learned how to increase what could be received from the earth, and how to store it for future use. Industrialization took place when we learned how to rip the earth apart to get what we want. Environmental imbalance, chaos and destruction are the result. Destroying the natural balance due to greed and selfishness is anti-spiritual life. Sankranti is a time to reconnect with *prakriti* or the manifest creation and the ancient cycles of nature, to rediscover and rectify your relationship with the world around you.

Give and take

Sankranti is a time to appreciate what has been received and be grateful for that. Health, happiness and prosperity are what everyone needs in life. Good health of the individual,

of family members and of the community is a blessing that often goes unacknowledged. Happiness is the basic prerequisite of life, and the ability to be happy and content in any situation and station of life is a sign of spiritual health. Prosperity is the absence of lack in life, the absence of struggle and strife to fulfil the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, security and safety. These are the foundations of life that need to be recognized, appreciated and honoured on Sankranti.

The sadhana and aradhana performed on this day must be done with humility and gratitude. Everything you have, has come due to the grace of the divine. Without that grace, you would not even exist. When this is realized, humility and gratitude naturally and spontaneously develop. These sentiments find their expression through daan. In the process of daan, you connect with the other person, who is receiving, and your intention is to bring health, happiness and prosperity to that person. That is why the practice of daan on Sankranti has immense significance. On Sankranti you should give, not take, and bow your head in gratitude for what you have already received.



There are twelve Sankrantis in a year and they are divided into four categories: Ayan Sankranti, Vishuva or Sampaat Sankranti, Vishnupadi, and Shadashiti Mukhi Sankranti.

TWO AYAN (अयन) SANKRANTIS



The most important are the two Ayan Sankranti which are Makar Sankranti or Uttarayana Sankranti and Kark Sankranti or Dakshinayana Sankranti. These two Sankrantis relate to the winter and summer solstice. The word *solstice* is derived from two Latin words, *sol* meaning sun, and *sistere* meaning to cause to stand still. Makar Sankranti is conceptually equivalent to the winter solstice, also known as midwinter, that occurs when one of the earth's poles has its maximum tilt away from the sun. The winter solstice marks the shortest day and longest night of the year. Kark Sankranti is related to the summer solstice. This occurs at the moment the earth's tilt toward the sun is at a maximum. On the day of the summer solstice, the sun appears at its highest elevation with a noontime position that changes very little for several days before and after the solstice. For every place north of the Tropic of Cancer, the sun is at its highest point in the sky and this is the longest day of the year.

Makar Sankranti मकर संक्रांति

To the spiritual aspirants this day has a special significance. The six-month period during which the sun travels northwards is highly favourable to them in their march towards the goal of life. It is as though they are flowing easily with the current towards the Lord. Paramahansa sannyasins roam about freely during this period, dispelling gloom from the hearts of all. The devas and rishis rejoice at the advent of the new season, and readily come to the aid of the aspirant.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Makar Sankranti usually falls on 14th January in the Gregorian calendar, and according to the Hindu calendar on the solar month of Makar and the lunar month of Magha. Makar Sankranti marks the beginning of uttarayana, the six-month time period when the sun moves into the northern hemisphere. Makar Sankranti heralds the end of winter and the arrival of spring throughout the northern hemisphere. The cold days end, and throughout the next six months of





the uttarayana period, the days will become longer and warmer. Makar Sankranti represents the transition or movement from darkness to light, from ignorance to wisdom, and from *tamas* to *sattwa*. On this day begin the positive conditions that are conducive to *sadhana* and spiritual activities. This Sankranti is an important moment for spiritual aspirants and an auspicious time to take a *sankalpa* and begin a *sadhana*.

Makar Sankranti is associated with the bounty of the earth, harvests and prosperity. Moving out of the cold and barren winter as the days become longer, the earth begins to flourish and flower, crops are grown and harvested, livelihood is secure and people are happy. Makar Sankranti is a joyous celebration for farmers that represents the culmination of one agricultural cycle and the beginning of another. It is a time of harvest and plenty. The rituals of Makar Sankranti honour *prakriti*, nature, as the giver of life. For without the earth that provides, the rain that nurtures and the sun that sustains there would be no food and no life. The *bhava* or feeling that permeates the Makar Sankranti rituals is one of gratitude, appreciation and love.

Family relationships, especially that of father and son, are accorded special significance on this day and this relationship has a celestial dimension also. Makar Sankranti is the day when Surya enters the Makar rashi, when the father Surya visits his son, Shani. Shani is the lord of the Makar rashi, the





Shani

sign of Capricorn and Shani is also worshipped on this day as the son of Surya. The story of Shani's birth points to the inimical relationship between Surya and Shani. Saranyu, Surya's wife, found it difficult to bear his constant glowing radiance and was being burned by his brilliance. To escape, she created a *chhaya* or shadow version of herself, and fled to the forests.

It was Chhaya who became pregnant with Shani. While he was in her womb, Chhaya was engrossed in the worship of Lord Shiva, going without food for days on end in the blazing sun. Her tapasya was so intense that it had a profound influence on her unborn child and turned his skin black.

When Shani was born, Surya was greatly surprised to see that his son had a dark complexion. Doubt crept into his mind. He insulted the dignity and purity of his wife and refused to believe that Shani was his son. While in the womb, Shani had imbibed the power of his mother's tapasya. Hearing his mother insulted, Shani stared at his father in anger, and the power of that anger turned the body of Surya charcoal black. The horses of his chariot stopped running and Surya stood still. This eclipse of his radiance caused great despair to Surya and he invoked Lord Shiva to help. Shiva explained that intense tapasya was the reason for Shani's dark complexion. Surya accepted his mistake and apologized.

Another astrological event that takes place during Makar Sankranti is the proximity of the sun to Shravana nakshatra, the lunar mansion in vedic astrology. While transiting the Makar rashi, the sun passes very close to Shravana, the 22nd nakshatra which is associated with listening and learning, and opens the way to receive material as well as spiritual knowledge. Shravana is ruled by Lord Vishnu

and it is said that at this time the doors of Lord Vishnu's abode in Vaikuntha open and his grace descends upon all. This indicates that the conditions are optimal for the sincere aspirant to connect with *vidya*, the dimension of spiritual knowledge and wisdom. Makar Sankranti is the day when King Bhagirath performed tarpanam for his ancestors with the water of holy Ganges after his great tapasya



to bring the celestial river down on earth. This was the day that Bhishma Pitamah chose to die; lying on a bed of arrows he waited for uttarayana to leave his mortal coil. It is believed that death on this day brings salvation to the deceased.



The sun, symbolizing wisdom, divine knowledge and spiritual light, which receded from you when you revelled in the darkness of ignorance, delusion and sensuality, now joyously turns on its northward course and moves towards you to shed its light and warmth in greater abundance, and to infuse into you more life and energy.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

Daan and activities

The day prior to the Makar Sankranti is called the Bhogi festival. On this day, old, worn-out and dirty things are discarded and burnt. Homes are cleaned and white-washed. Even the roads are swept clean and lovely designs are drawn with rice-flour. These practices have their own significance from the point of view of health. But, here I remind you that it will not do to attend to these external things alone. Cleaning the mind of its old dirty habits of thought and feeling is more urgently needed. Burn them up, with a wise and firm resolve to tread the path of truth, love and purity from this holy day onwards.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Sankranti is observed with a morning bath in the sacred rivers, followed by the sandhya upasana, and arghya to Surya. Pooja and aradhana of Surya is conducted. Khichari and other foods are prepared, especially those using *til* or sesame seed, and *sarson tel*, or mustard seed oil. In many places celebrations begin one day earlier, when homes are cleaned, old items are discarded or burnt and an atmosphere of *shuddhi*, purity, is created externally and internally. Makar Sankranti is an important day for daan and the *punya kaal muhurta* or the auspicious and beneficial time is given in the ancient texts. For Makar sankranti it is forty ghatas after the actual moment of transition. One ghata is a duration of 24 minutes. Forty ghatas is equal to approximately 16 hours. All the activities of Sankranti: yajna, hawan, anushtana, or mantra sadhana, daan, and bhoj, feeding of all those present, should all be performed during this muhurta. If the muhurta falls after sunset, the Sankranti activities should be performed the following morning after sunrise. Daan given during the punya kaal muhurta on the uttaraayan Sankranti is said to provide one million times the spiritual merit of daan performed on a normal day. For this reason, it is said that daan performed on Makar Sankranti is an eternal or punya karma.

Traditionally *agni daan*, the gift of fire and wood or *deep daan*, the gift of light, would be given on Makar Sankranti. There are three levels of the agni tattwa and all are governed by Surya. On the physical level agni represents light, warmth, protection and security. Fire dispels darkness, keeps away wild animals, and is a fuel for warmth and cooking. On the subtle level, agni represents manipura chakra, the centre of dynamism, will power and achievement. Manipura is the dimension of *tejas*, spiritual endeavour and aspiration. In the spiritual dimension, agni is *prakash* or light that dispels ignorance. The *jiva*, the individual consciousness, after taking birth, is subject to the conditioned form of tamas. Tamas is the dark night of the soul, where the consciousness is in darkness, engrossed in the selfish confines of the individual ego. Agni represents the light of spiritual awareness.

An offering of agni as daan invokes the power and lustre of Surya for the benefit of the donor. So it is said that the person who gives agni becomes bright, radiant and happy. If rice has been harvested, that should be given as daan. Food and water should be given to cattle. To Brahmins, scriptural books should be given, along with asana or carpets to sit on. Present-day items commonly given are food, especially khichari, a preparation of rice, dal and vegetables. Other foods given are those which are heating in nature, such as til, jaggery or mustard oil. Other items that provide heat and warmth are also given like clothing and blankets.



To many people, Makar Sankranti ushers in the New Year. The corn that is newly-harvested is cooked for the first time on that day. Joyous festivities mark the celebration in every home. Workers, farmers and the poor are fed and clothed and given presents. On the next day, the cow, which is regarded as the symbol of the Holy Mother, is worshipped. Then there is the feeding of birds and animals. In this manner, the devotee's heart expands slowly during the course of the celebrations, first embracing with its long arms of love the entire household and neighbours, then the servants and the poor, then the cow, and then all other living creatures. Without even being aware of it, one develops the heart and expands it to such proportions that the whole universe finds a place in it.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Kark Sankranti कर्क संक्रांति

Kark Sankranti is the transition of the sun into the Kark rashi, the zodiac sign of cancer that occurs on or around 16th July. This day also marks the beginning of *dakshinayana*, the next six-month time period when the sun moves into the southern hemisphere. During these six months it is said that the devas go to sleep, and while they are sleeping, it is Lord Vishnu who maintains and preserves all of creation. Lord Vishnu is the deity who presides over these six months, including *chaturmas*, the four months from July to October. Vishnu is also the ishta of Kark rashi and on Sankranti his aradhana is paramount during which the *Vishnu Sahsranama* stotram is traditionally chanted. Often accorded special significance is the worship of Varaha, the third incarnation of Vishnu.

Each avatar of Vishnu represents a particular aspect of the protection of dharma and the maintenance of harmony and order. In ancient times, the powerful demon Hiranyaksha kidnapped the earth and submerged her in

the primordial waters. Bhudevi cried out in anguish and distress and her cry was heard by Lord Vishnu. Vishnu took the form of the Varaha, an enormous boar, and descended into the depths of the oceans to rescue her. In the ocean, Varaha encountered Hiranyaksha, who obstructed his path and challenged him to a duel. Ignoring the demon's threats, Varaha lifted the earth on his tusks. Hiranyaksha charged towards him in rage and the two fought fiercely. Finally, Varaha slayed the demon. He rose from the ocean bearing the earth on his tusks and placed her gently in her original position, as the gods and the sages applauded.



The aradhana and invocation of Varaha links this Sankranti with the preservation of dharma and the maintenance of ecological balance and harmony. Kark Sankranti occurs during the monsoon season, and the success of the future crop is dependent on the correct amount of rainfall at the right time. If the monsoon rain is too early or too late, too much or too little the crop will be affected. If there is severe flooding, no agricultural work can begin until the water abates. Varaha is propitiated to ensure the timely emergence of the earth from the waters and to protect the crops. Varaha rescues and protects the goddess Bhudevi, who represents *dharma* or righteousness and appropriate living. This shows the connection between *adharma*, or inappropriate lifestyle and indulgence, and environmental imbalance. When there is dharma in the world, the earth is happy, safe and prosperous. When adharma prevails, the earth is endangered and sinks into the abyss of environmental chaos and catastrophe.

Daan and activities

Traditional activities on Kark Sankranti also include bathing in the sacred rivers during sunrise, followed by prayers, worship and offerings made to Surya, the lord of the sun, to attract his grace and benevolence. It is through the grace of Surya that the seasons are balanced and are conducive to fertility and harvest, which in turn brings health and prosperity. Lord Shiva is also propitiated on Kark Sankranti with abhishek. *Pitra tarpan*, offerings to the ancestors to honour and respect the departed souls, is also performed.

The punya kaal muhurta takes place thirty ghatas before this Sankranti. Daan given during this time gives one million times the spiritual merit of daan performed on a normal day. Daan performed on Kark Sankranti is an eternal or *punya* karma. Traditionally items that would assist people in navigating the rivers and crossing water were given in daan. Due to the difficulty in travel to obtain supplies, daan was given to rectify any particular shortage or need. Those who were hungry were given food, those who were unwell would be given *aushadhi*, medicinal herbs, those without clothing were given clothes. Milk and ghee were also given. Any kind of daan can be given on this day including any item related to Lord Vishnu.



Be charitable. Be generous. Treat your servants as your bosom-friends and brother workers. This is the keynote of the Sankranti festival.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

TWO VISHUVA (विषुव) OR SAMPAT (सम्पात) SANKRANTI

The Vishuva or Sampat Sankranti are Mesha and Tula Sankranti. Mesha Sankranti is conceptually equivalent to the vernal equinox and Tula Sankranti equates to the autumnal equinox. The word equinox is derived from the Latin *aequus* meaning equal and *nox* meaning night. The equinox occurs when the centre of the visible sun is directly above the equator. On the day of an equinox, day time and night time are of approximately equal duration all over the planet. The equinoxes are the only times when the solar terminator, the edge between night and day, is perpendicular to the equator. As a result, the northern and southern hemispheres are equally illuminated. The equinoxes are directly related to the seasons of the year. In the northern hemisphere, the vernal equinox that occurs in March around the time of the Mesha Sankranti marks the beginning of spring in many cultures. The autumnal equinox that occurs in September around the time of the Tula Sankranti marks the beginning of autumn.

Mesha Sankranti मेष संक्रान्ति

Mesha Sankranti is also known as Maha Vishuva Sankranti. On 15th April the sun enters Mesha rashi, or the zodiac sign of Aries. This day marks the beginning of the New Year in most Hindu solar calendars. These solar calendars follow different rules to mark the first day of the year depending on the exact time of the Sankranti. In Odisha the first day of the year is celebrated on the same day as Sankranti if it occurs before Hindu midnight. In Tamil Nadu when Sankranti takes place after sunrise and before sunset the year begins on the same day. If Sankranti takes place after sunset then the year begins on the following day. In Bengal, when the Sankranti takes place between sunrise and midnight of the day, the year begins on the following day. If it occurs after midnight the year begins on the next following day. Mesha Sankranti is celebrated as Puthandu in Tamil Nadu, as Vishu

in Kerala and as Pana Sankranti in Odisha. Mesha Sankranti is celebrated as Naba Barsha or Poila Boishakh in West Bengal. In Assam the celebration is known as Bihu and as Baishakhi in Punjab.

The time of Mesha Sankranti correlates to the rabi harvest, the agricultural crops like wheat, barley, oats, linseed, gram, mustard and chickpeas that are sown in winter and harvested in the spring. It is a time of plenty and abundance. Crops are harvested, vegetables are picked and the trees are laden with fruit. Among the fruits of the rabi harvest are almond, banana, ber, grape, guava, lemon and mangoes. The vegetables include beetroot, eggplant, chickpea, lettuce, cabbage, onion, lady finger, radish and fenugreek. Gratitude for the bounty and generosity of prakriti is the predominant bhava of Mesha Sankranti. Humility, kindness and generosity are the expressions.

Daan and activities

Fifteen ghatis before and after the transition of the sun are considered to be the punya kaal muhurta and the most auspicious time for Sankranti activities and daan. If the Sankranti occurs after sunset but before midnight, then the latter half of the day is considered as correct for Mesha Sankranti rituals and activities. If the Sankranti occurs after midnight, then the first half of the next day is considered correct. Traditional activities on this day include bathing in the sacred rivers followed by argyhya, the invocation of Lord Surya and the offering of water. Ganesha is propitiated to bring success and good fortune in the New Year, and the chanting of *Hanuman Chalisa* is often done, along with *Vishnu Sahasranama*.

Traditionally sheep are shorn around the time of Mesha Sankranti, and it is auspicious to give a sheep in daan. The modern-day alternative is to give wool, blankets, or woollen clothing. Daan items appropriate for the heat of the season are also given during this Sankranti such as fans, shoes and umbrellas. *Gharas*, pots full of water, are given, and juices of

seasonal fruit such as bael, lemon and green mango are also given. Sattu or ground chickpea is also given.



Today on Mesha Sankranti daan is being given to people who have been invited from Munger town and they are all drivers of three wheelers, the auto rickshaws, who take their passengers from station to home, from Munger from Jamalpur, here, there and everywhere. In the hottest of the days, in the coldest of the days, sometimes in the worst weather and conditions possible, they have to work in order to eat two rotis a day and provide for their children. These people provide the support to society and through their labour people are able to go about their daily business in comfort. I am very happy to invite them to the Sankranti program to receive their prasad. Today they will be receiving daan according to the traditional guidelines for Sankranti written in the scriptures. This daan is given with the sankalpa of Sri Swami Satyananda for their peace, plenty and prosperity in life.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Tula Sankranti तुला संक्रांति

Tula Sankranti occurs when the sun enters the Tula rashi, or the zodiac sign of Libra. Tula Sankranti is also known as Garbhana or Garvana Sankranti. *Garbha* means womb, and indicates the state of pregnancy, or fertility. Tula Sankranti relates to the kharif harvest, or the second agricultural cycle in India. Kharif crops are usually sown with the beginning of the first rains in May or June, before or during the beginning of the monsoon season. The kharif season varies by crop and state, starting at the earliest in May and ending at the latest in January, but is popularly considered to start in June and to end in October. These crops are dependent on the quantity of rain water as well as its timing. Too much rain, too little or at the wrong time will ruin the crop and the entire year's efforts are wasted. Rice is the most important kharif crop and it needs rainfall from 150 to 200 cm and a flooded field during the growth period.

To invoke the shakti of fertility and create the optimum conditions for the harvest, prakriti, the manifest nature, is worshipped during this Sankranti, in the form of Lakshmi and Parvati. Parvati is the power of transformation, the continuous cycle of change that controls all things and leads to transcendence. Lakshmi is Bhudevi, the representa-



tion and totality of the material world, and she is Sridevi, the creative energy of Narayana. Endowed with the auspicious and divine qualities, she represents the energy that sustains creation and brings plenty and prosperity in life. Lakshmi is the shakti invoked during the reproductive and ripening phase, when the leaf stem of the rice plant begins to bulge, the panicle emerges and flowering begins. Once the rice has pollinated, ripening begins,

and over the next thirty days the individual grains swell in size and change colour as they mature. During this period, rainfall can severely reduce the yield or completely ruin the crop. Lakshmi, who emerged from the *kshirasagar*, the ocean of milk, is also the shakti invoked to protect the harvest by controlling the water element. Surya is propitiated to provide maximum sunlight which stimulates the ripening process.



Daan and activities

Holy dips or bath in Karnataka, Mayavaram and Bhagamandala are considered auspicious not only on the day of Sankranti but throughout the Tula month. In Karnataka, Tula Sankranti is known as Cauvery Sankramana and the river Cauvery is worshipped. Vishnumaya was the daughter of Lord Brahma, who later became the adopted daughter of Cauvery Muni, and was called Cauvery. Her beauty and charm caught the eye of Rishi Agastaya, and she became his wife. As a rishi, her husband spent his time engaged in tapasya, sadhana and discussions on spiritual philosophy. He seldom spent time with his wife, and one day due to her husband's neglect, she fell into his bathing tank. From this tank, she overflowed to benefit the earth and the people of Kodagu which was her original wish before marriage. The source of the Cauvery river is called Talacauvery. On the Sankranti day when the sun enters the Tula rashi, a small fountain known as Brahmakundike on the of Brahmagiri Hills starts filling up the Talacauvery. This water is considered especially sacred and it is said that by drinking this water one can be freed from the bondage of worldly existence.

Fifteen ghatis before and after the transition of the sun are considered to be the punya kaal muhurta and the most auspicious time for Sankranti activities and daan. Different aradhanas and poojas are performed for the blessings and grace of Lakshmi, to protect the farmland from floods, drought, insects and pests and bring a successful harvest. Where there is Lakshmi's grace, there is prosperity, plenty and contentment. There will be plenty of food for all, and no one will go hungry. In Odisha, Lakshmi is offered fresh rice grains, wheat grains and branches of kara, a medicinal plant used to ward off insects. In Karnataka, Parvati is invoked and worshipped with a coconut wrapped in silk cloth, and offered betel leaves, areca nuts, sandalwood paste, vermilion and turmeric paste, and bangles. The appropriate and auspicious items of daan during the Tula Sankranti are items of wealth symbolizing Lakshmi, but also rice paddy, seeds, and ghee. Around the time of the Sankranti, the weather changes and becomes cooler. This is the time to construct and provide *goshalas*, areas for the shelter and feeding of cows, in preparation for the winter.

When you celebrate the Sankranti in this manner, your sense of value changes. You begin to understand that your real wealth is the goodwill and friendship of your relatives, friends and neighbours; that your wealth is the land on which your food grows, the cattle which help you in agriculture, and the cow which gives you milk. You begin to have greater love and respect for them and for all living beings – the crows, the fish and all other creatures.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



FOUR VISHNUPADI (विष्णुपदी) SANKRANTI



The Sankranti of *Vrishabha*, or Taurus, *Vrishchik* or Scorpio, *Kumbh* or Aquarius, and *Sinha* or Leo signs are known as Vishnupadi Sankranti. For all the Vishnupadi Sankrantis the correct and most appropriate time for auspicious activities such as daan is sixteen ghatis before the actual transition. Daan performed in these muhurtas is said to give 100,000 times the ordinary merit. It is inexhaustible and eternal in that the spiritual merit is not extinguished after death but remains with the donor birth after birth. The body does not suffer from cold if cloth is given in the cold seasons. Prosperity does not abandon the person who gives grains, cloth, shelter, a dwelling place or asana. The person who gives red cloth and grains according to his capacity becomes healthy and is prosperous. His mind is pleased, balanced and happy.

Vrishabha Sankranti वृषभ संक्रांति

This Sankranti takes place on 15th May when the sun enters the zodiac sign of Taurus. May is the hottest month in India and the items that gave protection from the scorching heat of the sun were considered the most appropriate and

auspicious, such as shoes, umbrellas, fans, sandalwood and water. Daan of water is extremely auspicious and full of spiritual merit. During Vrishabha Sankranti the trees should be given water, especially the Peepal tree. Dahi bhat, a preparation of curd and rice which is cooling and beneficial in the hot season should be given. This Sankranti is also an important time for *go daan* or the daan of cows, considered one of the most auspicious forms of daan, generating the highest spiritual merit. Cows provide milk, ghee, cheese, and *goita* or fuel for fires.

Vrishchik Sankranti वृश्चिक संक्रांति

When the sun enters the zodiac sign of Scorpio around the 17th November it is called Vrishchik Sankranti. Early morning activities include bathing in the sacred rivers and aradhana of Surya with the chanting of mantras and arghya. The chanting of *Aditya Hridayam Stotram* is especially auspicious during this Sankranti. Aradhana of Lord Vishnu is also conducted with the *Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram*. During this Sankranti the traditional daan is *deep daan*, or the gift of light. Light removes darkness, and the merit associated with the giving of light relates to increased lustre, vitality and improved eyesight at the physical level, awakening of prana and tejas at the subtle level, and the dawn of spiritual luminosity and jnana at the spiritual level.

It is said that the person who makes the gift of a lamp for the benefit of others, shall make the lamp of perfect knowledge blaze within themselves. The first preference should be for deepaks made with ghee, and the second from oils such as sesame, mustard. The deepak should remain with the flame leaping upwards, to ensure the refulgence of the person who has given it. The burning deepak should never be removed from the place where it is kept, nor should it be destroyed, or the flame extinguished by hand. Deepaks can be decorated with saffron and sandalwood paste. Other items that are traditionally given in daan include cotton clothing, urad dal and salt.

Kumbha Sankranti कुम्भ संक्रांति

Kumbha Sankranti occurs when the sun enters the zodiac sign of Aquarius around the 14th February. Bathing in the sacred river Ganga especially in Triveni where Ganga and Yamuna converge is performed on this Sankranti. During Kumbha Sankranti any offering made to cows is considered highly auspicious. Grass, hay, fodder and water for cows is offered in daan.



Sinha Sankranti सिंह संक्रांति

When the sun enters the zodiac sign of Leo around the 18th August, it is Sinha Sankranti. During this month, fields are covered with lush green grass and cattle graze freely, producing maximum quantity of milk. Traditionally gold and silver was given in daan on this Sankranti. Items made by hand, whether wrought from iron, or made from metal, sculptures or handcrafts are given on this day. Kheer or rice pudding, honey, ghee, salt, jaggery and dahi given as daan will attain the maximum merit.

SHADASHITI MUKHI (षड्शिति मुखी) SANKRANTI

The Sankranti of the following signs *Dhanu* or Sagittarius, *Mithun* or Gemini, *Meen* or Pisces and *Kanya*, or Virgo is called Shadashiti Mukhi. For these four Sankrantis, sixteen ghatis after the actual Sankranti moment are considered for auspicious activities. Daan given on this day gives 86,000 times the ordinary merit.

Dhanu Sankranti धनु संक्रांति

When the sun enters the zodiac sign of Sagittarius around the 17th December it is called Dhanu Sankranti. It is considered very auspicious to take a *sankraman snan* or the

ritual bath in sacred rivers like Ganga, Yamuna, Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna, Tungabhadra and Cauvery. In Odisha, special worship and poojas are offered to Lord Jagannath on this day. The famous Dhanu Yatra relating to the childhood of Sri Krishna is held during this period at Bargarh town of Koshal region in Western Odisha. This is the winter season and often the coldest time of the year. On this day, daan of clothing, particularly woollen clothing, and blankets is auspicious. Food items include ghee, coconuts and lemon.

Mithuna Sankranti मिथुन संक्रांति

When the sun enters the zodiac sign of Gemini around the 16th June, it is known as Mithuna Sankranti. The month of Mithuna is related to prakriti and the powers of creation, in particular prithvi, the earth, as Bhudevi the mother goddess. The activities of this Sankranti invoke the fertility of the earth in a primordial worship of Shakti, the cosmic creatrix. It is said that at the time of this Sankranti, the goddess earth menstruates, and in honour of this event all agricultural work ceases and the earth is allowed to rest undisturbed. In Odisha, Mithuna Sankranti is celebrated as a three-day-long festival. The second day signifies beginning of the solar month of Mithuna from which the season of rains start. The fourth day is called Vasumati gadhua, or the ceremonial bath of Bhudevi. The goddess is bathed to restore the shuddhi of the tattwa. Following this, pooja is performed and the goddess is adorned with chandan, or sandalwood paste, scent, flowers, and sindour. The celebration of the yearly menstruation of the cosmic Shakti in the form of Ma Kamakhya is celebrated during this Sankranti with the Ambubachi Mela at Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, Assam.





At this time the nurturing power of the earth as Devi is accessible and her grace flows forth.

Daan and activities

On Mithuna Sankranti, the traditional items of daan are clothing and vehicles. Due to the heat in the month of June, umbrellas and shoes are given. *Anna daan* and *jal daan* the gift of grains and water, along with salt, is also highly esteemed, as there may be difficulty in obtaining adequate food and water due to the weather. During this Sankranti *vidya daan*, the gift of knowledge, is highlighted. Scriptures including the eighteen Puranas, *Ramacharitamanas*, *Mahabharata*, and other dharma shastras are traditionally given.

Meen Sankranti मीन संक्रांति

Meen Sankranti occurs when the sun enters the zodiac sign of Pisces around the 13th of March. Bhumi daan or the gift of earth is traditionally given and is considered the most auspicious form of daan during this Sankranti. In place of earth, plants or seeds can be given, as these also represent the *prithvi tattwa*, or the earth element. Other items given are also of utility in general household use, beds, water vessels,



cooking pots and utensils, water, grains especially wheat, bael fruits and flower malas.

Kanya Sankranti कन्या संक्रांति

Kanya Sankranti occurs when the sun enters the zodiac sign of Virgo around the 17th September. This day begins with bathing and preparations for pooja. All machines are worshipped and offered flowers; no work is done on this day. This day is also known as *Vishwakarma Jayanti* or the birthday of Vishwakarma. In the *Rig Veda* Vishwakarma is the deity of the creative power that holds the universe together, and considered to be the *devashilpi* or divine architect of the universe from before the advent of time. According to the instructions given by Brahma, Vishwakarma constructed and created the whole world. He presides over the sixty-four mechanical arts and is said to have revealed the *vastu shastra* and *sthapatya veda* or science of architecture and sculpture. Vishwakarma is the father-in-law of Surya. It is through Vishwakarma that the cosmic prana was divided and aligned with specific energies and intentions to become the weapons of the devas. The worship of Vishwakarma is a method to access the higher levels of energy and manifest that power as a creative force in daily life.

Daan and activities

Vishwakarma is revered by those who work with their hands and machines, including the engineering and agricultural communities, tradesmen, architects, artists and sculptors. Traditional activities on this day begin with the effort to attain the state and experience of shuddhi. Early morning begins with bathing and the rituals of personal cleanliness, including wearing new clothes and cleaning both the home and place of work. This external cleanliness generates a fresh mental attitude that is able to perceive the positive and creative opportunities in the mundane and routine experiences of daily life. The day is dedicated to traditional poojas, rituals and celebrations. Poojas are conducted for the safety and success of future work and endeavours, and the proper functioning of machines. Traditional food preparations are made and distributed to all, like fruits, sweets, khichari, kheer. Other food items given on this day are til, sattu, ghee, dahi. The daan of clothing and also of housing or shelter is traditionally considered auspicious and will bring maximum merit. Special attention is given to those who need medical care, and daan of *aushadhi*, or medicinal herbs, medical treatment, nutritious food, shelter and care for the ailing and sick are all important forms of daan on Kanya Sankranti.





Today we are giving daan to some people who have been our neighbours since 1963, the first foundation of the ashram. These people, they live a very neglected life, they don't have many oppities, and some people even consider them outcast. But, they are human beings just like you and me. They have their needs just like you and me, every human being has their basic needs. They have the same spirit of God in them that is there in you and me, so what is the difference? There is no difference, it is all created by mind. It is all created by the human mind.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

The Twelve Sankrantis

Makar Sankranti	–	January
Kumbha Sankranti	–	February
Meena Sankranti	–	March
Mesha Sankranti	–	April
Vrishabha Sankranti	–	May
Mithuna Sankranti	–	June
Karka Sankranti	–	July
Simha Sankranti	–	August
Kanya Sankranti	–	September
Tula Sankranti	–	October
Vrischika Sankranti	–	November
Dhanu Sankranti	–	December

3

Lifestyle and Conduct for the Sadhaka

The tantras proclaim that when the individual soul assumes a physical form, it is always sick. It always experiences some kind of affliction, whether physical, psychological or spiritual. There is not a moment or period in life when one is completely healthy on all dimensions and at all levels. One may be physically fit, yet weak psychologically. One may be psychologically stable, yet emotionally unstable. One may be emotionally fit, yet spiritually weak. Life is always influenced by major and minor afflictions, which happen when the lifestyle is not regulated. Therefore, it is the regulation of lifestyle that results in the attainment of health, and that is the teaching of the tantras as well yoga.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Everything in life is comprised of and controlled by the three gunas: sattwa, rajas and tamas. In the manifest dimension, Surya is also said to reflect the three gunas. The rising sun in the morning is governed by rajas, the midday sun by sattwa and the setting sun by tamas. In the unmanifest dimension, the surya mandala is the pure effulgence that is beyond the influence of the gunas. The sadhanas of Saurya tantra aim to propel the sadhaka beyond the influence of tamas towards sattwa. Using rajas as the force of transformation in lifestyle,

conduct and attitude, the sadhaka makes the effort to attain the condition of sattwa. The sadhana is a comprehensive and integral approach. Not limited to vrats and practices, the aim is to improve the quality of life by overcoming destructive habits and conditions. A combination of yama, niyama, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana and dhyana is suggested for the sadhaka to gradually perfect and transcend the experiences of tamas, rajas and sattwa, until the realm of the surya mandala is attained.

The role of rajoguna

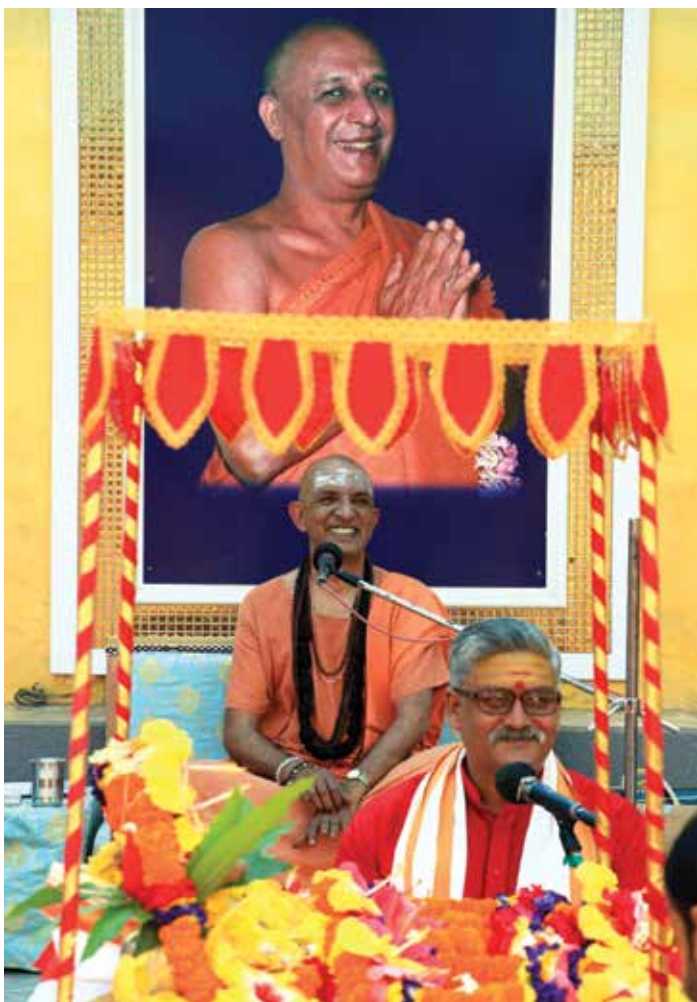
In Saurya tantra, the guna of primary importance for the sadhaka is rajas. Rajas, symbolized by the rising sun, is the state of dynamism and activity. The dawn brings light that banishes darkness. In the same way, the rajoguna is the force that propels the aspirant out of the darkness and conditioned state of tamas. Rajas is a dynamic power, the innate tendency that drives desire, passion, motion and activity. Rajas is the force of change. If the energy of rajas is guided correctly through sadhana, it becomes a catalyst to propel the aspirant towards sattwa. If it is not, then the force of rajas drags the aspirant further and further into the dark inertia of tamas.



In Saurya tantra, the body is said to be full of rajoguna, not tamoguna. This indicates that it is not the gross form of the physical body governed by tamas that is important, but the subtle pranic body. Essentially prana devolves from rajas and it is the identification with prana that is important in Saurya tantra. In order to utilize the capacity of rajas for transformation the sadhaka is directed to move beyond identification with the physical body. Instead the practices connect one with the pranamaya kosha, the intermediary body between the gross material dimension and the subtle consciousness and energy. Within the pranaymaya kosha it is the *pingala nadi*, the solar flow of prana in the body that is activated by the different practices, vrats and vidhi of Saurya tantra. These are all methods to channel the force of rajas towards spiritual dynamism.



However, care must be taken to ensure that the intensity of rajas propels the sadhaka in the right direction, out of the conditioned experience and limited awareness, towards the effulgence of sattwa. The qualities of mind and emotion associated with rajas, such as desire, attachment, ambition and anger must be counteracted. It is at this state that the lifestyle element of Saurya tantra becomes important, and this is particularly relevant in the management of mind and emotions. The scriptures state that the heart is to be purified through the heart and direct the sadhaka to cultivate the positive emotions and bhavana in daily life. The mind is to be purified through the mind. The sadhaka has to make the effort to transform the quality and nature of thoughts through thought itself, by replacing the negative with the positive. The intellect has to be purified through the intellect, not only by correct understanding, but through the development and application of jnana in everyday life.



People think of yamas and niyamas as ethical and moral teachings. That is incorrect. They are an expression, a behaviour and a conditioning of the mind. In moments of strife you want to discover peace. So why not also try to discover love, compassion, sympathy, understanding and joy?

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Lifestyle yama and niyama

Generally, yamas are considered to be moral or ethical ideals or guidelines, but the use of yama and niyama in almost every branch of yoga or tantra implies a much greater importance. Yama and niyama have been explained by Swami Niranjanananda within the context of lifestyle. The practices and sadhanas have to be understood within the context of the lifestyle prevalent at the time. In the vedic and tantric eras the lifestyle was completely different to the modern materialistic world of today. Previously, yamas and niyamas were a natural expression of the sattvic qualities that everyone was striving to acquire, imbibe and live. The aim was to enhance the beauty of life, give a higher purpose and meaning to life, and make life a journey of learning, attainment and fulfilment.

This was the aim of the ancient spiritual traditions, practices and thought. Therefore, it is these yamas and niyamas that must be imbibed and lived in order to revive and experience the ancient traditions and vidya. Practising yama and niyama requires the willpower and internal discipline to change and modify the daily routine

and environment. Not only the external but also the internal environment has to be modified and enhanced. The thoughts, attitudes and perceptions that guide the development of the personality and nature have to be observed, managed and adjusted. It has to be a conscious effort. Different yamas and niyamas are used to create this change in the thinking pattern which then transforms behaviour and actions, making them better and more luminous, more sattwic.

Yama and niyama relate to lifestyle, for they represent the emergence of a better, positive conditioning. They always connect you with the positive dimension of your nature and are an antidote to the negative. If *himsa*, non-violence, is negative, then you connect with *ahimsa*, non-violence, which is positive. If *asatya*, absence of truth, is bad, you connect with *satya*, truth, which is positive. In this way, yamas and niyamas always take you in the most positive direction that you can aspire for.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Mind is not a psychological construct or a thought process, mind is energy. Mind is prana. Anger, desire, greed, and envy are the waves of that energy when it is influenced by *rajas*. Ignorance, confusion, unhappiness, depression are the waves of the same energy when *tamas* predominates. The positive conditions and experiences of mind, like love, compassion, empathy and understanding, are the waves of the mental prana when influenced by *sattwa*. To align the waves of the mind with the energy field of *sattwa*, Saurya tantra has prescribed six *yamas* or positive conditions of mind that need to be cultivated.

Pranic aspect of yama and niyama

In Saurya tantra yama and niyama are tools to influence the pranamaya kosha, particularly the chakras. Although for the sadhaka, the focus of yama and niyama remains the same,



the effort is made to cultivate a particular attitude or mental state, or performance; the aim of the sadhana is also pranic. The aim of yama and niyama is to influence the movement of prana within the pranamaya kosha. By cultivating particular mental states and influencing the consciousness and prana through various physical and mental behaviours, prana is channelled into the chakras. The *chakras* are vortices or whirlpools of pranic energy at specific areas in the body which

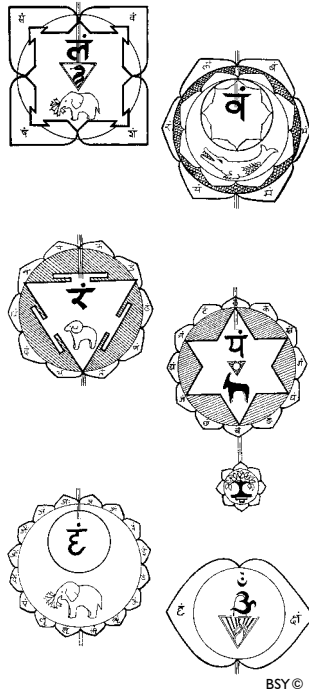
control the circulation of prana permeating the entire human structure. They represent the different levels of consciousness and energy to be awakened in every human. The ascent of consciousness through the chakras is the direct or indirect aim of every sadhana.

In the tantras, chakras are represented by lotuses. The symbol of the lotus indicates the three different levels of existence; mud indicating the material level, water representing the subtle level, and air representing the transcendental. The lotus starts to grow in the mud, the darkness and ignorance of the material world. It grows through water in an effort to reach the surface, symbolizing the endeavour and aspiration of the aspirant through sadhana to delve deep



into the subtle dimension and awaken inner experiences. Eventually the lotus emerges from the water into the air and sunlight, representing the illumination and dawning of spiritual experience. Accordingly, the chakras can also be divided into three levels:

1. Mooladhara and swadhisthana: the two lower chakras are predominantly tamasic in nature. Here the consciousness, actions thoughts, behaviour is self-oriented and material.
2. Manipura and anahata: the two middle chakras are a mixture of both negative and positive qualities. This is the level where rajas predominates, where actions and thoughts are a combination of dharma and adharma.
3. Vishuddhi and ajna: the two higher chakras are predominantly sattwic. The positivity and creativity of life is experienced and expressed, and the actions and thoughts are in accordance with dharma.



The evolution from rajas to sattwa is the aim of the yamas and niyamas in Saurya tantra. Just as manipulation and control of prana in any of the chakra points will induce a corresponding state of awareness, in the same way cultivating a specific state or mental condition will induce prana to predominate at the corresponding chakra. Each is directly related to the other. Both physical and mental stimulation of the chakras can lead to changes of consciousness. Each of the petals of the chakra corresponds to a particular mantra, known as *varna akshara*, and also a *vritti*, or pattern of mind. The vritti indicates a manifestation

of the mental prana that is either to be transcended, in the case of the lower chakras, or cultivated in the case of the higher chakras. When the chakras are activated the gross nature, the limited and conditioned aspects, are gradually removed and the *pranashakti*, the inherent power, within the chakra is awakened. Along with the *pranashakti*, the associated attainment of *jnanashakti* and the higher mind is experienced. Yama, which is a positive mental state or attitude, is essentially a potency of *jnanashakti*. When used as a daily *sadhana*, yama combines both *jnanashakti* and *pranashakti* as a means to influence the evolution of consciousness. When consciousness and prana evolve fully in all the chakras, the resulting state of *jnana* is known as the state of *Surya*.

Each yama and niyama will correlate to a particular vibration and frequency of prana that is conducted by various nadis and influences a specific chakra. Four chakras are highlighted in Saurya tantra in connection with yama and niyama. The first in the sequence is *anahata*, indicating the importance of purifying the heart, the centre of sentiments, feelings and emotions. The second chakra is *manipura*. Once the heart is pure, when *manipura* is accessed prana can be directly utilized for spiritual evolution. The third chakra is *ajna*, the confluence of the *ida* and *pingala* nadis and the awakening point of *jnana*. This final convergence of lunar and solar forces is the launching pad for the ascent to *sahasrara*. *Sahasrara* is the *surya mandala*, the spiritual dimension where the merger of the individual with the infinite takes place.



THE YAMAS OF SAURYA TANTRA

The yamas are *kripalutva*, the cultivation of compassion; *kshamatva*, the ability to forgive; *satya*, truthfulness; *arjavam*, simplicity; *shaucha*, purity of mind; and *samata sarvabhuteshu*, goodwill towards all creatures.

Kripalutva – anahata

The quality of *kripalutva* or compassion is associated with the radiance of the sun that shines on everyone, without distinction. Rich and poor, fortunate and unfortunate, all receive the benevolent rays of the sun in equal measure. At the pranic level this expansive radiance indicates the *anahata chakra*, the state of openness and undifferentiated love. *Anahata* is the centre of emotional energy, and is considered the seat of the *atma*, the spiritual essence. When purified, the prana generated by emotions can be transformed and channelled into devotion. The emotional power flows in one constant stream, in one direction, transforming the entire pranic structure of the individual. The mind becomes overwhelmingly one-pointed which leads to transcendence.

In Saurya tantra, as a yama *kripalutva* is used to direct the prana to *anahata chakra* and activate that centre. *Kripalutva* is not simply feeling sorry for someone and experiencing a spike of emotional prana, which is quickly dissipated. *Kripalutva* means the total redirection of mental and emotional prana. The energy that normally flows outwards and attaches to different situations and people, is redirected to *anahata chakra*, within *hridayakasha*, the space of the heart. Each chakra vibrates at a particular rate and velocity. The chakras at the lowest point of the energy circuit operate at a lower frequency. They are grosser and create grosser states of awareness. *Anahata* operates at a higher frequency and generates both higher intelligence and subtler states of awareness.



Anahata chakra awakens refined emotion in the brain and its awakening is characterized by a feeling of universal, unlimited love for all beings. When anahata awakens all your actions are controlled and ruled by unselfishness and you develop spiritual compassion. You understand that love does not involve bargaining and it is free of expectation.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

At anahata, the prana that fuels emotion is channeled into the higher sentiments such as love, compassion, empathy. The frequency of energy changes. The quality and quantum of emotion changes. The prana is not dissipated in limited and subjective expression. The quantity and quality of prana is optimized. The overall charge is positive and this positivity influences the total personality, eventually becoming the basis of life. This is the foundation of compassion that begins when the pranas are redirected to anahata. *Vishnu granthi*, the second psychic knot, representing the bondage of emotional attachment, is located here. When this knot is opened, one becomes free of all selfish, egoistic and emotional attachment, and attains mental and emotional control, equilibrium and peace. In the tantras, this is

referred to as *chintamani*, the jewel of correct and positive thought. It implies the ability to understand any situation or individual person in total, and act appropriately. Equality of vision and understanding is the basis of objective emotional wisdom. Kripalutva is a method to awaken anahata chakra and experience the pure energy of radiant positive emotion that simply is, regardless of the circumstances.

The first preparation, therefore, with regards to awakening anahata is to change your entire way of thinking. You must become extremely optimistic and positive, always full of hope. You must never dwell in the negativity of the mind. Physically, mentally and spiritually you must be completely at peace with yourself, others and the whole community at large. Though the world is full of conflicts, contradictions and deep animosities, you have to always feel deep peace throughout your being.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Kshamatva – manipura

Kshamatva, or the capacity for forgiveness, indicates an expansive state of awareness that leads to pranic awakening and illumination. Kshamatva is the yama that removes pranic blockages caused by the rigidity of ego. Once the impediments and blockages are removed, kshamatva helps to stimulate manipura chakra, the centre of prana. *Manipura* literally means the city of jewels. Located behind the navel in the spine, manipura is the storehouse of prana, associated with heat, vitality, dynamism, generation and preservation. Kshamatva promotes the proper functioning and awakening of manipura. This yama acts as an antidote to the arrogant, dominant and self-aggrandizing aspects of ego.

When we are unable to forgive, it is the self-identified ego that takes prominence. Resentment is the entanglement of prana with negative emotions and memories. This creates a blockage that impedes the free flow of prana along the nadis. The memory of the past incident comes up again and again,

producing another cycle of negative thought and emotion. This entire cycle is fuelled by prana and repetition of this pattern not only increases the blockage, but also depletes the supply of prana. Both the free flow and quantity of prana are affected and this in turn depletes manipura chakra. Instead of light and radiance, there is darkness.

With kshama the opposite happens. The attitude of kshama is like the light of the sun that illuminates everything, big and small, good and bad. In the daylight, everything is seen. Once the light of awareness dawns, the destructive aspects of mind and ego lose their power, the blockages are removed and the prana is released. Through forgiveness the block is released, and the negativity stops. A feeling of lightness is experienced, physically, mentally, emotionally and psychically. The pranas flow again, the individual emotional and mental entanglements are transcended and the awakened energy of manipura is used not for self-promotion, but for transcendence. This is the role of kshamatva in the development of a spiritual perspective in life.

What does it mean to forgive? If you don't empty your bowels for a day, you suffer; you need to eliminate everything from the stomach regularly. In the same way, you have to take out the rubbish from the mind. In meditation, when you are discovering the cause of your happiness and unhappiness, the person who has triggered these states will appear in your consciousness. At that moment, visualize the person clearly and forgive them. Just finish the negative emotion, take it out from your heart, clear it. The next morning, give a nice smile to the other person and say, "Good morning. How are you today?" Let them wonder what has happened, what miracle has taken place. If they think some miracle has taken place, their anger will also subside. To be able to smile and drop your aggression, that is forgiveness.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



Satyam and arjavam – ajna

Satyam and arjavam, truthfulness and simplicity, are the next two yamas. These are related to the sun as the bringer of light. It is in the darkness that falsehood, complication and manipulation exist. When the light shines, these shadowy facades disappear and only the truth remains. At the pranic level, satyam and arjavam access and activate ajna chakra. Deception, hypocrisy and complication are conditions of mind that divert prana from the higher centres and channel it to the self-absorbed and delusional realms of dimensions of tamas. Both are forms of manipulation that engage the mental energy in constructing false versions of reality in order to sustain the ego. Maintaining these elaborate fabrications is a constant drain on the supply of prana, keeping the mental and emotional energy trapped in lower experiences. The consciousness remains centred in mooladhara and swadhisthana, and the state of mind is limited by false projections and desires for security, passion and enjoyment. Truthfulness and simplicity open the channels of thought that were blocked. The prana and

consciousness are able to move upwards and there is a gradual progression towards higher states until, in ajna, the opening of *jnana chakshu*, the eye of wisdom, takes place.

Ajna is the realm of the purified mind which is not constrained to the senses but expands beyond the duality of manifest experience. Just as in the sunlight there can be no darkness; when ajna chakra awakens there can be no falsity, there is only satyam, the realm of truth that is attained when the eye of wisdom opens. Satyam does not only mean speaking the truth, it means living the truth. Knowing the truth and living that truth is satyam. This means the ability to see oneself with total awareness, without denial, self-projection, or hypocrisy. This is possible when ajna chakra is active and the *drashta*, the objective witness, awakens.

When the drashta state of awareness is established, the complications and manipulations of life naturally and spontaneously drop. The insight of an awakened ajna chakra is like a laser beam that severs the attachments and frivolous forms of ego that keep one bound to the material dimension. Attachment and ego identification confine the mental prana to a limited and conditioned experience of life. This is the darkness of avidya. Yet when the witnessing attitude awakens, it is like the dawn of the rising sun, there is simplicity and clarity of thought, feeling and being.

It is not just a question of understanding the mental states in meditation. One has to make the effort to bring that higher realization into the daily activities. That realization manifests in the form of refined qualities, refined behaviour and interaction with the world and a deep understanding. When we have these things in our life and we are experiencing them, then that state is similar to the state of realization.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Shaucha – sahasara

The yama of *shaucha* or purity, is associated with the agni tattwa. Fire is the great purifier, able to transform everything into its essence, while remaining ever pure itself. The heat of the agni tattwa is the essential attribute of various practices and sadhanas of purification. It is this quality of the sun that is utilized in the yama of *shaucha* to propel the sadhaka towards the experience of total illumination that is sahasara chakra. According to the scriptures, there are 72,000 nadis in the pranamaya kosha. These pathways of pranic, mental and spiritual currents, form a matrix throughout the physical body. They provide energy to every cell, organ and part through their vast network, carrying prana back and forth in every direction. In Saurya tantra these nadis are associated with the thousands of rays of the sun.

The word nadi comes from the root *nad* which also means a river or a flow of water. Prana is constantly moving along the nadis and these subtle channels of energy form the distribution network for prana. If these channels are blocked, the prana is blocked. In the physical body, excess fats and cholesterol accumulate around blood vessels causing arterial plaque blocking the blood supply. In the same way, the

indulgences and waste of sensorial experience also build up and obstruct the flow of prana. When the prana is blocked, the consciousness is stuck at that level of experience, and this is what is reflected in the mind, emotions and expressions in life.

When the nadis are purified, the prana flows, awakening the different chakras and ultimately the experience of sahasara is attained. Out of the seventy-two thousand nadis, ten are considered important, ida, pingala, sushumna, gandhari, hastijihva, yashaswini, pusha, alambusha, kuhu and shankhini. These ten flow out to the senses, to the five karmendriyas and five jnanendriyas. It is through the senses that consciousness connects to the external world. When the senses are in constant contact with tamasic influences, the nadis will become blocked, and prana cannot enter. This in turn creates impurity at physical, mental, emotional and psychic levels and the consciousness remains bound and conditioned by the tamasic experience.

The senses need to be purified first. To maintain physical health and hygiene, the environment should be clean, free of dirt and bacteria. Food should be fresh and pure, not processed, stale or rotten. The same principle applies to the health of the mind and emotions. The mental environment should be kept clean and swept free of negativity daily. The appropriate food should be given to the mind. The mental and emotional input should create and promote happiness and positivity. Repetitive negative thoughts and emotions are the dirt that clogs the nadis.

What intention have you created to remove negativity from your life? What awareness have you developed to recognize sorrow as a sickness disturbing the health of your mind? So where is the concept of shaucha when it comes to the mind? If your hands get dirty you will go and wash your hands, but if the mind gets dirty it won't be washed, rather the dirt will accumulate.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

The yama of shaucha is the way to clear out this accumulated dirt. Shaucha is maintained by constant association with the attributes of sattwa, positivity, lightness and purity in all aspects of life. In order for the prana to ascend to sahasrara, the merger of ida and pingala has to take place. That merger occurs in ajna chakra, when ida and pingala nadis are purified and balanced. Sahasrara is the attainment of total purity, experienced as light and illumination, the crown of expanded awareness. In Saurya tantra this is the surya mandala, the pure effulgence that is the illuminator of light. Shaucha is the gateway to the highest point of human evolution, the merging of cosmic consciousness with the surya mandala.



When the nadis have become purified, certain external signs appear on the body of the yogi. They are lightness of the body, brilliancy in complexion, increase of the gastric fire, leanness of the body, and along with these, the absence of restlessness in the body. They are all signs of purification.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

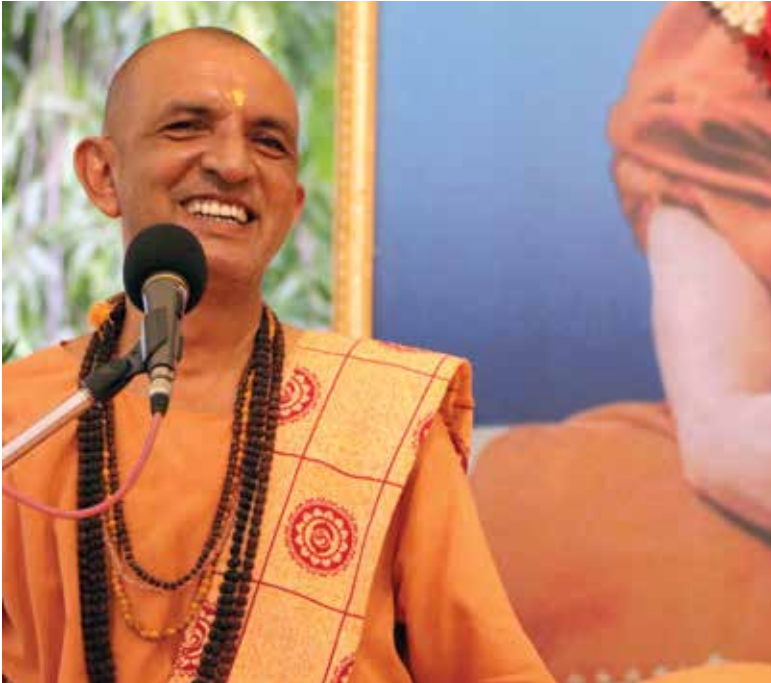
Samata sarvabhuteshu – sahasara

The final yama is also related directly to the sun and the attainment of sahasrara. In the same way that the rays of the sun emit light without discrimination, samata sarvabhuteshu is the feeling of goodwill that extends out to all when the notion of duality is transcended. In this state of awareness, the relative world ceases to exist and the underlying essence of the spiritual reality is perceived. The individual ego consciousness and notion of 'I' dissolves and the associated distinctions no longer have any purpose. Distinctions between friend and foe, family and stranger, male and female, human and animal all operate at the relative dimension, where the individual ego consciousness perceives and experiences the world in relation to itself.

This changes at ajna chakra. Duality drops and equal vision without discrimination begins when one is able to awaken the drashta and rise above the experiences of pleasure, pain, sorrow and difficulties, and in their stead experience luminosity, knowledge and freedom. Until ajna chakra, the world of duality is maintained by ida and pingala. Pingala governs the vital, the physical realm, corresponding to the sympathetic nervous system, the right hemisphere of the brain and the associated mental qualities of analysis, logic, intellect and verbal expression. Pingala is psychosomatic energy directing the karmendriyas, the organs of action. Ida governs the mental, emotional, intuitive and creative processes corresponding to the parasympathetic nervous system and the left hemisphere of the brain. Ida is the somopsychic aspect of life, where the prana flows inwards from the jnanendriyas or senses to the mind. When the sadhaka can harness the dual forces of ida and pingala something incredible happens. The two opposite poles of pranic energy fuse and become one. A third force arises. It is like striking a match on a match box, the positive and negative forces are brought together in perfect balance and fire is created.

When the two flows of prana merge at ajna chakra, this is the pranic experience of *advaita*, non-duality. When this

is expressed as samata sarvabhuteshu, the same feeling of goodwill extends out not only to all fellow human beings, without distinction, but to the entire created universe. This is the understanding and expression of one who has transcended duality. When sahasara is attained, the experience of universality dawns and that universality when expressed is samata sarvabhuteshu. This is the attainment of pure love that expresses as a feeling of oneness and connection with all, the highest state of consciousness where one merges with the divine. When the individual prana ascends to sahasrara, it merges with the cosmic prana. Everything becomes light. In Saurya tantra this is described as the radiance of the surya mandala. It denotes pure luminosity and wisdom. By entering into surya mandala, one becomes knowledge, one becomes the light. The expression and emanation of such a person is seen as rays of goodness that reach out to one and all.



THE NIYAMAS OF SAURYA TANTRA

The scriptures proclaim that everything is accomplished through *achar*, or good conduct. Good conduct is the real dharma. Through good conduct, illness is cured, good health is acquired, and bad habits disappear. Happiness, prosperity and longevity are attained. In Saurya tantra *niyamas* are the aspects of good conduct that support progress in *sadhana*, not only by fine-tuning the lifestyle but also by enhancing the optimal functioning of the *pranamaya kosha*. It is said that by the practice of *niyama* the inauspicious mental impressions, patterns and psychic traces are destroyed. *Niyamas* act as antidotes to the *vrittis* identified in the lower *chakras*. By repeated performance the negative *vrittis* are transcended and the vibratory frequency of the *chakra* is heightened.

The six *niyamas* are *akrodha*, being without anger, *ahimsa*, being without violence, *tapah*, complete restraint, *homa*, the performance of rituals and correct conduct for householders, *daan*, giving, and *japa*, remembrance.

Akrodha – manipura

Akrodha refers to the state of being that is completely without anger, or *krodha*. The deity of *manipura* is known as *Vahni*, or *Agni*. *Vahni* gets his power from the sun. In the same way as the power of the sun gives light and energy to the whole solar system, the sun is the principle of *manipura*. The sun also controls the orbits of planets, from Mercury to Pluto and throughout the solar system. Every life form depends on the sun. Everything comes from the power of the sun and exists only by the enormous



attraction to the sun. In the same way, human existence gets its power from manipura. Manipura is the centre of existence within the domain of the physical body and its subtle aspects. As the sun radiates light and energy, so manipura radiates and distributes pranic energy throughout the body, regulating and fuelling life's processes. The ten petals of manipura represent the five pancha pranas and the five sub-pranas, all of which are controlled by manipura.

Anger, or krodha, is often described as an expression of manipura chakra. However, it is important to differentiate between the expression of manipura that is blocked and that which is awakened. When manipura is blocked or weakened, the tamasic and rajasic influence predominates. It is here that anger raises its head. The self-oriented ego seeks to reinforce its position against potential threat, or to project its grandiosity and importance. This manifests and is expressed outwardly as desire, expectation and ambition. When that desire or expectation is frustrated or ambition not fulfilled, the response is anger. This tamasic and rajasic level indicates a blocked and debilitated manipura chakra. Expressing anger intensifies the influence of rajas upon manipura and further debilitates the prana in the chakra. The intensity of an angry emotional outburst is fuelled by prana and each outburst is a huge drain on the supply of prana in the chakra. Repetitive outbursts cause a cycle of massive depletion, which must be avoided.

The basic principle is that you should not allow anything to build up in your mind to the point where you can no longer handle it. You should not allow any negative thought to become so overpowering that it results in an inner psychosis or outward explosion.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Conservation of prana is of primary importance in sadhana. Therefore, akrodha, which begins with learning to restrain the emotion of anger, is the first niyama of Saurya tantra.



Akrodha ultimately leads to the state of *shanti*, the stable experience of peace and harmony within and without. When this is attained it is possible to merge the two flows of prana and apana at manipura. When these two forces intersect and fuse together, they create immense heat and the combined energy is directed back into manipura chakra. The force of that awakening brings about a total reorganization of the pranic flow in the body. Mooladhara is transcended and the base of kundalini becomes manipura chakra. The sadhaka attains a state of consciousness that is no longer bound by limited egocentric perceptions, personal prejudices and biases drop away, and the greater possibilities of human consciousness are revealed. With the enhanced power of decision and action, both worldly pursuits and spiritual pursuits will be successful.

When anger is controlled, it becomes transmuted into spiritual energy that can move the three worlds. Just as heat or light is changed into electricity, so also anger becomes changed into ojas. Energy takes another form. Energy is wasted enormously when one gets angry. The whole nervous system is shattered by an outburst of anger.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Ahimsa – anahata



Just as the sun removes darkness, love removes ego.
These two can never coexist.

—*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

Ahimsa, as a niyama, is more than just refraining from violence. It refers to the state of being that is completely free from himsa, the potentiality for harm. The motivation to harm others is linked to the instinctive drive for self-preservation that is governed by the lower centre of mooladhara. It is also sourced in the instinct of fear and the craving for pleasure that are expressions of both mooladhara and swadhisthana. The niyama of ahimsa is the method

to transcend these instinctive responses to life. In Saurya tantra this is seen not only from the mental and emotional perspective, but from the pranic perspective.

Attaining the state of ahimsa involves the total re-direction of prana from the lower centres of mooladhara, swadhisthana and also the lower expression of manipura. Each time the effort is made to restrain the lower impulses, to smooth out the spikes of emotional energy that erupt with instinctive reaction, prana is re-directed. Concentration on the higher and softer sentiments that encourage and support ahimsa, such as kindness, sympathy, understanding and support, will induce a change in consciousness. In turn, prana is channelled into anahata chakra, balancing and awakening that centre.

The expression of an awakened anahata is universal love. This love is universal in the sense that it is not constrained by and limited to the dictates of the individual ego. It does not depend on likes or dislikes, happiness or unhappiness. It is simply a state of full and undifferentiated prana that is experienced as love. In Saurya tantra, anahata is thought of as the cool moon that exists in complement to the hot sun. The moon merely reflects the light of the sun and has no light of its own. Yet the light of the moon is able to produce soma, the nectar of immortality. After the awakening of manipura, that is the illumination of the sun's rays, at anahata those rays become moonbeams and give birth to nectar. The nectar is consumed by the devas. Here devas represent the illumined state of consciousness that dawns when the sequence of sadhana is followed in the niyamas of Saurya tantra.

Practice of ahimsa develops love. Ahimsa is another name for truth or love. Ahimsa is universal love. It is pure love. It is divine prem. Where there is love, there you will find ahimsa. Where there is ahimsa, there you will find love and selfless service. They all go together.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



Tapa – manipura

Tapa as a niyama in Saurya tantra has two roles. It refers not only to practice of austerities to accelerate the pace of spiritual evolution, but also to the development of *nigraha* or restraint in all areas of life. When understood from the pranic perspective both of these aspects are complementary and relate to manipura chakra, the generation station of prana. The most important component in Saurya tantra

is prana, and the sadhaka has to learn how to activate, channel and conduct prana. The different vrats, mantras and sadhanas are all methods to purify the nadis, and awaken and increase the quantum of prana so it can be channelled to the higher centres of experience. Although the pranic network begins from a place called the *kanda*, the location where sushumna nadi connects with mooladhara, the main distribution of prana comes out of manipura. Thousands of nadis converge at manipura chakra, and this is experienced as a glittering array of sparkling jewels. Of all the chakras, manipura is the biggest junction point of prana. If manipura is blocked, weak and debilitated, then the supply of prana will be low and insufficient to activate the higher chakras and penetrate sushumna.

Normally the prana is flowing outwards, entangling with the manifest material dimension of life. The senses entangle the mind with the external world. The mind becomes obsessed with the events of the outside world through *raga* and *dvesha*, attraction and repulsion. The emotions are directed outwards due to involvement and attachment. Senses, mind and emotions are all powered by prana flowing outwards and this forms the basis for interaction in the material world. Prana is severely depleted through incorrect and indulgent living, excessive emotional outbursts and mental negativity. Anger, jealousy, hysteria, fear, revenge, manipulation and misery all drain prana. Obsessive thinking drains prana. It is like turning on a tap and leaving the water running. As long as the emotional turbulence continues unabated, the prana is running out. Even the length of breath increases when emotions are disturbed, indicating an increase in the amount of prana released during exhalation.

Tapa is the total restraint and redirection of prana. In Saurya tantra tapa indicates the restraint that applies at all levels that is necessary to reverse the flow of prana. Instead of being wasted outwardly, prana is directed inwards, where it can be utilized for illumination. At the most basic level, tapa is sensorial restraint and a balanced interaction

with the external environment. Tapa means to make the necessary changes to the daily routine and lifestyle to bring balance and harmony in life. It implies total control over all the activities of the mind and the senses. Mental tapa is the cultivation of the appropriate and positive thinking process and the ability to empty the unnecessary content of the mind. Emotional tapa is the proper direction and expression of sentiment and emotion which fosters harmonious, supportive and positive relations with people and the environment. By practising tapa the sadhaka is not only able to redirect the outgoing prana, but also to liberate the trapped prana from the blockages of indulgence and negativity.



Why do you need restraint? It is because human behaviour is always in excess. Your responses are in excess and even your thinking is in excess. There is a condition of excess everywhere, and everybody wants the right to express themselves. That is all right, you may express yourself, but you should remember that what is also required in life is the responsibility of restraint.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



Homa and vrat – ajna

Homa refers to the sacred fire which symbolizes the divine light on earth. The performance of homa or hawan is a combination of sankalpa, pooja, chanting of mantra and offering of oblations into the fire. *Vrat* is a vow, an undertaking, or a resolution to carry out a particular ritual or vow and strictly maintain all the rules and injunctions associated with that vow for spiritual upliftment. Vrat may involve different austerities, such as going without food and water, maintaining *mouna* or silence. As *niyama*, homa and vrat access, stimulate and awaken ajna chakra, the realm of the purified mind and the drashta awareness. To perform homa and vrat, a different kind of awareness is required. It is not externalized awareness where the mind and emotions are fully engrossed in the experiences of the senses and the consciousness remains enmeshed in the physical and material existence. Nor is it the internalized awareness where the senses are withdrawn and inner realms of pranic and psychic experience are traversed. It is the balance between these two poles of experience.

In the performance of vrat and homa the individual is connected to and experiencing both the inner and outer realms. At the physical level, awareness is focused on the external environment and the components of the ritual, such as lighting the fire, offering samagri, waving incense, offering *naivedan* or prasad. At the subtle level,

the awareness is observing the pranic and vibrational experiences generated while participating through mantra chanting, fasting, asana, mudra and other practices and observances. At the transcendental level, it is the awareness of inner awakening and illumination. In order to attain this state of expanded homogenous awareness, ajna chakra must be active. Ajna chakra is the centre of the mind, representing a higher level of awareness that is characterized by the drashta, the objective witnessing consciousness that is free from the dualities of like and dislike, attachment and repulsion. The drashta awareness has to be maintained throughout the performance of homa and vrat.

Ajna chakra is the merger of the pingala and ida nadis, the twin currents of lunar and solar prana that govern the mental and vital processes. Ajna nadi is symbolized by a lotus that has two petals. Pingala nadi conducts the solar prana that facilitates experience at the material level and is represented by the mantra *Ham*. Ida nadi conducts the lunar prana that supports the experience of the subtle level and is represented by the mantra *Ksham*. When the merger of ida and pingala is attained the third flow of prana awakens, that lies within sushumna nadi. Sushumna nadi is the highway of transcendental experience and the spontaneous emergence of the pranava mantra, *Om*. It is this awakening that is the aim of homa and vrat as niyama in Saurya tantra.

The aspect of drashta that you have to cultivate within is maintaining the same objectivity and not getting involved in thinking, ‘This is my experience’, or ‘This is my joy’, or ‘This is my hurt’. You have to disconnect from your experiences in order to be a drashta. If you get taken by the current of the mental state through thought, feeling, absorption, or even memory, you are carried by the wind, by the current. Thus, on the practical side, the ability to be a witness of one’s own mind is important.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Daan – anahata



You prepare yourself for love by little acts of kindness. The elementary training in love, the ABC of love, is little acts of kindness.

—*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

Daan or giving is the niyama that relates directly to anahata chakra. Daan is given great importance in Saurya tantra and ideally should be performed daily, or on the auspicious days of the sun, especially the Sankranti days. During the celebration of the Sankranti conducted at Sannyasa Peeth, after the aradhana, hawan and katha, the daan program is the culmination of the event. Daan is given according to the scriptural references and for each Sankranti the correct and appropriate items are given. Gifting of certain items, including shoes, umbrellas, fans and clothing, as well as food items, such as milk, curd, jaggery and vegetables, are generally recommended in any aspect of Saurya tantra. Sannyasins and tapasvis should be given alms daily. As a niyama of Saurya tantra, the focus of daan is the bhava with which the gifting is performed. The items given are secondary to the cultivation of the best possible feelings of goodwill, understanding, empathy, sympathy and kindness.

These sentiments are the pranic basis of the connection that is formed between people at the time of daan. Daan fosters and cultivates the soft sentiments of life. This is the pranic basis of daan, not the hardness of arrogance and the rigidity of pride, but the softness of compassion, kindness and love. Daan prepares one for the awakening of anahata chakra, by redirecting the prana from the lower centres to anahata, and expanding the awareness from a selfish to selfless orientation. Performance of daan awakens the anahata chakra by channelling the pranic energy generated through the process. The prana consolidated at anahata then forms the basis for the progression into higher spiritual states and experience.



People have hard hearts, harder than granite, harder than a diamond, on account of wrong actions done life after life. This heart should melt. Only then can one achieve self-realization. Note well that there is no shortcut to self-realization. One without mercy, love and humility cannot realize the self. You must understand this clearly. The heart needs to be purified, and this melting of the heart is done by untiring selfless service and generosity. Be generous. Give, give, give. Apply this test: Does your heart melt at the suffering of others? Have charity and generosity become your very nature?

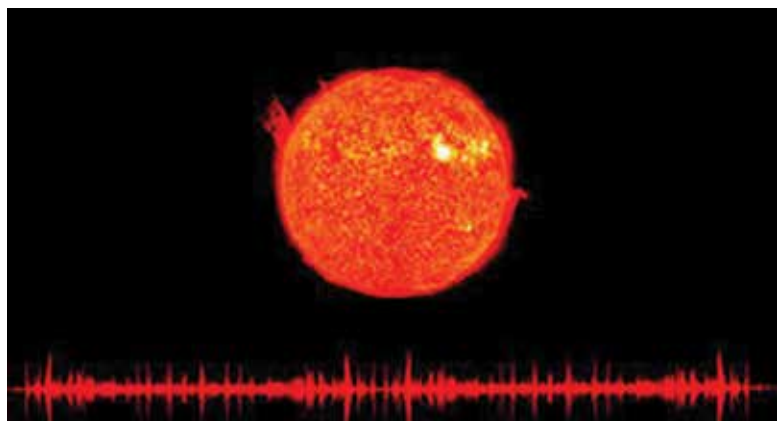
—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Japa – anahata and ajna

The niyama of japa in Saurya tantra relates not only to the repetition of mantra, but also to the concept of remembrance and connection that is created through the japa. Anahata means unstruck or unbeaten. Through pranic stimulation of anahata chakra, the vibratory field that is created connects the sadhaka with the realm of transcendental sound, the anahata nada. When anahata chakra awakens it is possible to hear transcendental mantras as these are non-sensory vibrations realized in the deepest states of meditation. Remembrance is the aspect of japa that awakens anahata chakra. Remembrance of someone with whom there is a bond of love, trust, respect and honour creates a specific pranic charge. When the remembrance is spontaneous, strong and constant, the intellectual mind is bypassed and the pranas are channelled into a form of awareness that is characterized by devotional sentiment, not thought.

Each of the petals of anahata chakra corresponds to a particular frequency of prana, a mantra and a vritti. The central force of the chakra radiates out externally through each petal. To awaken the innate power of anahata, this external radiation has to be reversed, either by concentration on the frequency of each mantra, or by sustaining the mental and emotional vibratory field at a frequency that will transcend each of the associated twelve vrittis. This is the aim of remembrance in japa. Remembrance transcends all the vrittis and the radiation of prana is reversed. From the petals prana travels back to the centre of the chakra and the pranic frequency generated activates the bija mantra of anahata. Through the power of the bija mantra a conduit between the individual and the higher aspect of prana is known as *mahaprana*, or cosmic prana.

Mahaprana is the pulsation or life force of every atom and planetary body which exists in the universe. Stars and pulsars which emit different kinds of radio waves



or gamma rays are also forms of mahaprana. If you started eliminating each wave in the cosmos one by one, eventually there would be just one kind of wave, which could be considered as the originating point of all the others. That point is known as mahaprana.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Cosmic prana is the source of all creation, the underlying throb or vibration of existence, permeating the manifest and unmanifest reality. In the manifest dimension prana is in constant movement and yet in the unmanifest dimension, the cosmic prana is undifferentiated, free from all dissipation and is both motion and motionless. Anahata chakra, governed by the vayu tattwa, is the door to the cosmic prana. When this door opens, the cosmic prana is experienced in the form of nada, pure spontaneous vibration that is the source of all creation. This is the realm of the surya mandala. The power of remembrance and japa was seen in the life of Karna, the son of Surya. When he was engaged in his upasana and japa, the memory of his father generated a huge pranic surge that directly penetrated anahata chakra. Karna was able to hear the mantras of his father Surya and intuitively communicate him.



Japa creates a particular state of mind: that of remembrance. It makes you remember something. Memory is *smaran*, remembrance. Smaran during japa refers to remembrance of your internal connection, your own experience of peace and contentment. Due to this smaran, japa takes you into a different space, and makes you feel happy, elated and content.

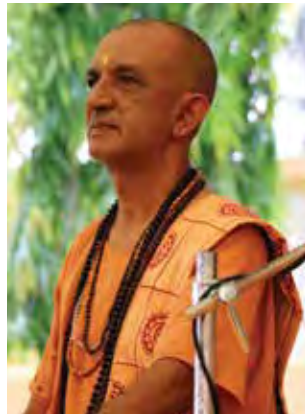
—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

The second aspect of japa as a *niyama* in Saurya tantra is connection. From the perspective of *sadhana*, connection implies two things. Disconnection with the material dimension and connection with the spiritual world. Connection with the material world takes place through the senses. Where the senses go, the mind and emotions follow, carried away by the twin currents of *raga* and *dvesha*, like and dislike. Connection with the spiritual realm takes place when this outward flow of awareness is reversed. At the pranic level, this happens through the restraint and redirection of *prana* that occurs during japa.

The form of japa prescribed in the Saurya tantras focuses on the mantras of the chakras. Along with the *bija* mantra, the set of secondary mantras or *varna aksharas* are chanted while focusing on each petal of the relevant chakra. Once the mantras for each chakra have been completed, the awareness ascends *pingala nadi* to the next chakra where the same process is repeated, progressively activating each chakra. At *ajna* chakra, as the two flows of *ida* and *pingala nadi* merge, the aim is to connect with the experience of merger between the two opposite poles of experience, the solar and the lunar. Ultimately, through this confluence between the solar and lunar flows of *prana*, *sushumna* awakens.

Japa is the *niyama*, the rule of conduct that allows you the flexibility to experience connection and disconnection. When you disconnect from the external world, it gives you the resilience to focus your entire attention on an experience which is personal to you. When you connect with that personal experience within, you discover peace and happiness.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



4

Saurya Sadhana

The way to connect with the energy, positivity and radiance of the sun is through sadhana and lifestyle. Sadhana is a process that purifies the body, mind, emotions and psyche and opens a channel between the individual and the spiritual dimensions of life. Lifestyle is determined by the attitude and approach to life, the choices that are made about how to live. In order for sadhana to make a qualitative difference, the aims and aspirations of the sadhana should be reflected in lifestyle also. What should be done, when should it be done, and how should it be done?

For any sadhana relating to the sun, certain days and astrological events are important. The first is Sunday, or Ravivar, day of the week that is governed by the sun. Shashti and Saptami, the sixth or seventh day according to the lunar calendar, are both related to the sun and auspicious for the performance of different vrats. Most auspicious are the twelve Sankranti days as well as the times of solstice, equinox and solar eclipse. The significant daily timings are sunrise and sunset, when the physiological as well as the cosmological conditions are optimal. Even just the simple act of watching the sunrise and the sunset daily will create an alignment with the natural rhythm and cycles of life. This alignment with the forces of *prakriti* or nature in turn influences the entire physiology, mind and emotions creating a state of optimal health, mental balance and emotional peace.

Three main practices have been given by Swami Niranjan-ananda according to the capability and commitment of the individual. These practices purify and activate the three dimensions of the individual body, mind and psyche and align it with the cosmic solar counterpart. Surya namaskara is the sadhana on the material level, relating to the physical body, the *sthula sharira*, the *jagrat* or waking state of consciousness that is dependent upon sensorial perception. The practice of sandhya upasana is the sadhana of the next level, where the practitioner uses pranayama and mantra to activate the subtle body or *sukshma sharira* to awaken and unfold the potentials of the mind, and connect with luminosity. The Saurya tantra vidhi accesses the causal body, the transcendental dimension existing beyond object and form, and through dharana and dhyana the merger of microcosmic and macrocosmic experience can take place.

SURYA NAMASKARA

Surya namaskara should ideally be performed at the time of sunrise, facing East. Although it begins with the physical body, here also we find three levels or dimensions of awareness and experience. The material level relates to the body and the physical benefits of the different asanas that revitalize the whole organism. The practice is comprised of seven different asanas of which five are repeated so that the body performs twelve postures in a rhythmical flow of movement and breath, expansion and contraction. Balancing right and left sides of the body, these twelve postures are performed twice to make one full round of surya namaskara. Through these twelve asanas, the abdominal organs and the stomach are stretched and compressed ensuring correct and efficient functioning. Surya namaskara stimulates the peristalsis of the intestines, which helps to remove constipation. It gently massages the kidneys and increases the blood flow through the whole body. The endocrinal system glands are harmonized and irregularities are removed



by directly massaging and increasing the blood flow. All the main muscles and joints in the body are mobilized, extended by stretching and squeezed in contraction. This helps return impure, stagnant blood to the lungs and kidneys for purification.

Performance of dynamic surya namaskara increases the pumping of the heart, blood flow is increased, and this helps to eliminate toxins from the body. Further areas of sluggish blood are also removed and replaced by purified and oxygenated blood. It brings about perspiration, which cleanses the pores of the skin clean and gives a glowing complexion. The lungs are emptied of impurities and stale air, and the body is revitalized by the extra supply of oxygen that it receives. The spinal column is bent and stretched in a systematic manner stimulating the circulation of blood in the whole spinal cord and nerve plexus.

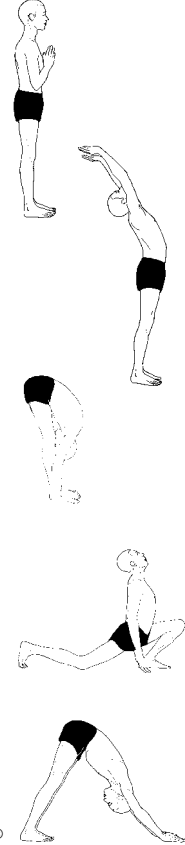
The subtle pranic dimension is accessed through breath and awareness. This activates the prana, stimulating the nadis to influence and awaken the different chakras. The twelve asanas represent the twelve adityas and the twelve transitions, or Sankrantis of the sun. Using bija mantras and visualization the causal dimension of experience is accessed through the chakras. Each of the twelve asanas correlates to a particular chakra, and the repetition of the bija mantra stimulates that pranic confluence, awakening the potentials

of spiritual experience. The six bija mantras are repeated four times during the full round of practice. The practice also begins with visualizing the radiant sun at ajna chakra and invoking the cosmic prana within oneself. The following mantras should be repeated at that time.

ॐ जपाकुसुमसंकाशं काश्यपेयं महाद्युतिम् ।
ध्वान्तारिं सर्वपापघ्नं प्रणतोस्मि दिवाकरम् ॥

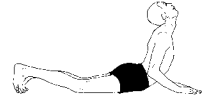
Om japākusumasaṅkāśaṃ kāśyapeyaṃ mahādyutim.
Dhvāntārīṃ sarvapāpaghnaṃ praṇatosmi divākaram.

Asana	Chakra	Bija Mantra
Pranamasana	Anahata	ॐ ह्राम् Om Hrām
Hasta utthanasana	Vishuddhi	ॐ हीम् Om Hrīm
Padahastasana	Swadhisthana	ॐ ह्रूम् Om Hrūm
Ashwa sanchalanasana	Ajna	ॐ हैम् Om Hraim
Parvatasana	Vishuddhi	ॐ हौम् Om Hraum



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Asana	Chakra	Bija Mantra
Ashtanga namaskara	Manipura	ॐ हः Om Hrah
Bhujangasana	Swadhisthana	ॐ ह्राम् Om Hrām
Parvatasana	Vishuddhi	ॐ हीम् Om Hrīm
Ashwa sanchalanasana	Ajna	ॐ ह्रूम् Om Hrūm
Padahastasana	Swadhisthana	ॐ हैम् Om Hraim
Hasta utthanasana	Vishuddhi	ॐ हौम् Om Hraum
Pranamasana	Ajna	ॐ हः Om Hrah



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SWAMI SIVANANDA ON SURYA NAMASKARA



You should all strive to maintain good health. Good health is very, very necessary for spiritual and material progress. Surya namaskara is a unique system. All that is good has been combined in surya namaskara. The genius of the sages has evolved this perfect synthesis of culture of body, mind and soul – surya namaskara. The sage had intuitive insight into the nature of the mass mind. He therefore cleverly wove into every man's daily routine this

unparalleled system of all-round self-culture. Along with faith in the religion of the ancient seer, the system of culture evolved by him has also been forgotten by the modern civilized man. You should revive this faith. It is the need of the hour. From today, be regular in the practice of surya namaskara.

Physical culture

A harmonious development of the body, mind and soul alone can enable you to fulfil the glorious role for which you have taken this birth here; you can attain self-realization. A sickly body acts as a dead weight preventing the mind from soaring high into the divine realm. An excellent, well-built body, strong and healthy, if it serves only to house an undeveloped or diseased mind, is capable of much harm and little good to anyone. A good body and a keen mind, with the soul entirely dormant, is likely a lovely mansion without foundation; it is bound to topple over any moment. A perfectly harmonious development of the body, mind and

soul makes one a sage, a seer, a saint and a godman. Surya namaskara achieves this harmonious development.

As a system of physical culture it is beyond comparison. It is a combination of vigorous physical exercise, yoga asanas, pranayama and sun-bathing. One round of surya namaskara done in the open air facing the sun would do you more good than hours at a gymnasium. The external muscles and the internal viscera are nicely exercised. The lungs are made to work rhythmically and fully. At the same time, the sun's life-giving rays play on your body, sucking away the toxins along with perspiration, invigorating circulation, and imparting life to the human organism – the life that only the sun can give you.

The influence of the sun

The sun is the presiding deity of the eyes. Practising surya namaskara facing the rising sun strengthens the eyes, removes all sorts of eye defects, and you enjoy good eyesight even in old age. There is some peculiar affinity between the sun and the eyes that the scientist cannot discover in his laboratory or by vivisection. It is known to (and seen by) only the rishis who possess the eye of intuition. Then you will enjoy the incalculable benefits of their wisdom which no

amount of vain argumentation will bestow on you.

Facing the morning sun, you are witnessing the daily miracle of God's creation. Night follows day and day follows night. The sun rises to dispel the darkness that enveloped the earth; all people rise with Him and feel thankful that God has granted them yet another day of health and strength to serve Him and His children. The mind is at once elevated to the realm of the divine.





What a glorious example the sun sets before us! He shines equally upon all. He is unaffected and unattached to anything. He is regular and systematic. He does the Lord's will unquestioningly and with perfect self-surrender. As you perform surya namaskara, meditate on these sublime ideas. Pray to the sun to illumine your intellect and enable you to lead the divine life.

Before you commence the practice, recite the *Surya Dhyana* and the upanishadic prayer to the sun. Before doing each namaskara, recite the names of the Sun. and, while you do the namaskara, repeat *Om* or your ishta mantra. This is very important. This provides the foundation for the magnificent edifice of surya namaskara. This is the culture of the soul. Pray to the sun: 'O Lord! Kindly illumine my intellect. Remove the ignorance that veils the true nature of myself. Let me behold my own self.' The Lord who indwells the sun will listen to your prayer. Your prayer will be answered. You will realize that just as there is not a pinpoint of darkness in the sun which is Absolute Light and Light alone, so also the self is Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Truth, Absolute Bliss, Perfection, Immortality, Infinity. So, kindly be regular in the practice of surya namaskara from today.

SANDHYA UPASANA

Sandhya upasana must be performed at the proper sandhyas. Then only the performer can derive much merit. There is a special manifestation of force at sandhyas. This force disappears when the sandhya is past.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

The sandhya is a beautiful example of the way the ancient seers understood life and their relationship with the environment, the universe and the divine. The individual was not perceived of as a separate entity, but a part of an interconnected whole. Nature or prakriti was understood to be essentially divine. Sadhanas developed as a way to enhance the connection between the individual and manifest prakriti, leading to an experience of the unmanifest spiritual dimension. Sandhya is one such example given in the Vedas. Sandhya upasana literally means to sit near the divine at the junctions of time. The word *sandhya* refers to the *sandhi* or the junction of night and morning, forenoon and afternoon, and day and night. The first one, which is called *pratah sandhya*, is performed when the sun is about to rise and the stars still glitter in the sky. The second one, *madhyahnika*, is performed at noon when the sun is directly above. The third one is called *sayam sandhya*, and is performed just before the sun sets.

These transitions of time are considered especially important for spiritual endeavour and last for approximately 48 minutes at each conjuncture. During these junctions, the polarities between the individual microcosmic existence and the macrocosmic divine dimension align. A window opens between the lower and the higher chakras, the gross and the subtle planes of existence, and the earthly and the celestial realms. Through the sandhya upasana, the individual can connect with the divine, and link themselves with the powerful energies of creation. The practice turns the mundane routine of the day into a sacred process of connection with the divine.

The purpose of the sandhya is to connect the individual and the cosmic consciousness. The sun above is the giver of light and life, and is the symbol of the infinite spiritual sun, the source of all consciousness and the substratum of the entire created universe, as well as the inner self of all beings. The individual aspirant is not only a part of this cosmic experience, but a microcosmic reflection of it. Within *hridayakasha*, the supreme space of the psychic heart, dwells the spiritual sun, the *atma*, or individual consciousness. The sandhya is a sadhana to bring about the conjunction, the *sandhi*, of the individual consciousness with the absolute supreme consciousness.

The complete upasana as given in the Vedas uses many different components of mantra, pranayama, pratyahara, dhyana and swadhyaya. Each component helps to remove the physical, mental and psychic impediments and enables the aspirant to rise above the confines of the individual ego and experience the divine consciousness. Every part of the process gives expression externally to a different internal mental attitude and feeling, or *bhava*. These different bhavas are progressively higher states of mind and prana in which a vibrational resonance is created between the individual and the cosmic dimensions.

The attainment of *shuddhi*, or the state of internal and external purity, is the objective of the first part of the sandhya. Shuddhi has to be obtained before invoking the shakti of the sun. It is through *apas*, the water element, that shuddhi is cultivated, indicating the importance of balance between these two tattwas, *apas* and *agni*, the power of fire. *Apas* is used along with different vedic mantras to purify the external and internal environments. The methods include *jal prokshan*, sprinkling of water on the body, *achamana*, sipping water with recitation of mantras, *indriya sparsha*, touching different parts of the body with water while repeating mantras, *marjanam* and *poorna marjanam* purifying the organs of the body.

The first part up to arghya consists of hymns addressed to water and its benefits. Sprinkling of water on the face and the head and the touching of the different organs such as the mouth, nose, eyes, ears, chest, shoulders, and head with wetted fingers, is meant to purify those parts of the body and invoke the respective presiding deities on them. They also stimulate the nerve centres and wake up the dormant powers of the body.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

Achamana

Achamana is done to purify the mouth, the tongue the sense organ of taste and the *kriya* or activity of speech. It is through the mouth that the mantras are uttered, and if this is not purified then the mantras may be tainted in expression. The shakti of the mantra will be blocked. The power and potency of the mantra depends on proper articulation and purity of sentiment. Achamana is signalling the cessation of ordinary gross speech, and the beginning of mantra. A different feeling is created in the sadhaka with the performance of achamana and any obstacles in the practice of sandhya are removed.



Indriya sparsha, or touching the senses, is the action that purifies the sense organs of the body. The relationship between senses and mind is of paramount importance in sadhana. In order for the mind to transcend the gravitational field of sensory information and access the spiritual dimension, the senses must be purified. The deities, or governing energies of the sense organs, are invoked through the mantra. To go beyond the normal activity of the senses, the assistance and grace of these deities is needed. Once awakened through the shakti of the mantra, these deities open the doors to the spiritual dimension. They direct the prana which illumines the senses. No longer limited to the gross material dimension, the senses then become conduits between the individual and the divine.

Marjanam

Marjanam also invokes the power of apas, the tattwa that creates and sustains life, and is innately linked to agni. Through marjanam one attunes to the cosmic interplay of water and fire. A perfect balance of water and fire, necessary to sustain the physical body of the sadhaka, is the basis for many of the higher surya sadhanas. The energy of water is invoked through the devatas who reside in the tattwa. These devatas influence three areas of human life. At the physical level, they provide sustenance through grains and food. At the mental and emotional levels, they bestow happiness and encourage devotion. At the spiritual level, they give the knowledge of Sri Hari, or Narayana, which leads to liberation.

In marjanam the prayer is offered to these devatas to remove the negativities, the impressions of past actions, incorrect behaviour and other impediments to spiritual progress and to lead the aspirant towards Narayana who is omnipresent in the waters. The *poorna marjanam*, or complete purification, includes a version of *neti*, the hatha yoga shatkarma. Water is inhaled through one nostril and exhaled out the other. Mantra is mentally recited to purify the residual effect of any impure thoughts or actions

committed, especially in anger. Negativity in thought, word and deed taints and hardens the prana. This has to be removed before spiritual understanding and experience can occur, and it is this pranic hardening that is neutralized by the water element.

Pranayama

Pranayama is the next component of the sandhya upasana, as a continuation in the process of purification. Nadi shodhana pranayama is performed with internal retention only, not external retention. The purpose is to purify the ida and pingala nadis and harmonize the solar and lunar flows of prana. The pranamaya kosha is activated, the *pancha pranas* or five pranas are stimulated and awakened. The pranayama kosha acts as the intermediary between the material, physical state of existence and the spiritual dimensions.

During pranayama the mantra is repeated mentally, during inhalation, retention and exhalation. This threefold repetition of mantra corresponds to the three granthis or psychic knots of existence that block the process of spiritual evolution. Brahma granthi at mooladhara chakra is acces-



sed during inhalation. Vishnu granthi at anahata chakra is accessed during internal retention when the breath is held inside the lungs and the entire chest area is expanded. During the exhalation it is the Rudra granthi at ajna chakra in the centre of the head that is accessed. The mantra repeated during pranayama is the repetition of *Om* in conjunction with all the *lokas*, or seven planes of existence, followed by the *Gayatri* mantra and the invocation to the waters.

Om is the imperishable Brahman; *Bhuh* is the basis of prana or vital energy; *Bhuvah* is the etheric or astral realm; *Swah* represents the ruler or master of all; *Mahah* is the venerable, worshipful; *Janah* signifies that which is without beginning or end, is eternal and not subject to time; *Tapah* are the rays or beams of knowledge; and *Satyam* is the unchanging existence, the permanent being. The *Gayatri* mantra is the invocation of Shakti, Narayana and Surya, representing the three conditions of life, creation, sustenance and realization. The *Gayatri* is in essence invoking the power of illumination: May our intellect be illumined by that light of the divine. Finally, the devata of the water is invoked for protection and blessing.

Sankalpa and Gayatri

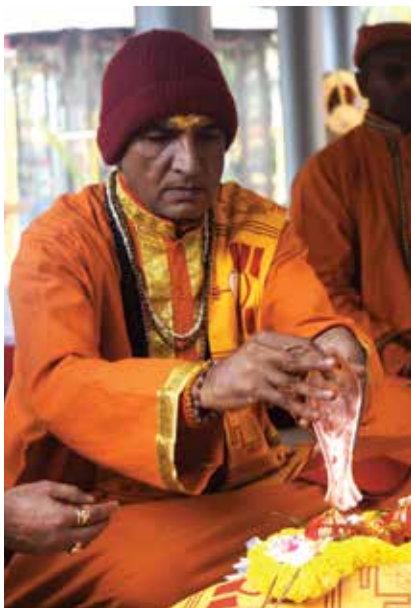
After the preliminary process of shuddhi is completed, the sankalpa is taken. A sankalpa is the combination of mantra and focused intent that harnesses the three shaktis of *iccha*, *jnana*, and *kriya* or the powers of desire, intelligence and action. The sankalpa becomes the receptacle for the intention of the sadhaka that binds the energies within its form and channels that force to achieve the stated resolve. Following the sankalpa are the two main components of arghya and japa. *Arghya*, or the offering of water to the sun, is considered of supreme importance in the invocation of Surya. In the same way that agni is invoked in havan to carry the offering, mantras and sankalpa to the devatas, in the worship of Surya, the agni tattwa, it is apas, the water element that is the conduit between the individual and the divine. Arghya is offered three times during each sandhya, while repeating the *Gayatri* mantra.

Following arghya japa of the *Gayatri* is performed. This begins with *nyasa*, the process of placing the mantra in different centres of the body. Nyasa is a method of infusing the body with the *akshara*, the seed of vibrational power that is mantra. The physical body becomes a pure vessel, the pranas are awakened and vibrating at the same frequency

as the vibrations of the mantra. When japa is done in a state of physical and pranic resonance the mind is bypassed and the sadhaka enters the dimensions of vijñanmaya and anandamaya koshas. To complete the traditional practice, after the *Gayatri* japa, upasthaanam mantras are chanted to return the Devi Gayatri to her abode.

Surya upasthaanam

Surya upasthaanam, the mantras to invoke and worship Surya, are chanted, invoking the omniscience and omnipresence of the deity. The mantras are a prayer to Surya to bestow righteousness, illumination of the mind, and spiritual realization. The grace of Surya is invoked in the form of longevity, one hundred years of life lived in happiness, rejoicing with family and speaking sweetly. The protection of Surya is sought with the prayer for health, freedom from disease and negativity. During these mantras the form of the deity is meditated upon. *Tarpanam*, the offering of water to the planets and



devas, is also performed, and the directions and other deities are propitiated with vandanam mantras and namaskara. Through these mantras the controlling forces of the environment and different phases of life are all invoked and honoured. The concluding elements of the sandhya upasana link the individual with the cosmos, the environment and all beings through the positive intention and prayers for wellbeing, peace and happiness.

SANDHYA FOR THE MODERN AGE



A person who performs the daily sandhya, according to the prescribed rules, at the appointed time as laid down in the scriptures, attains purity and success in every effort. He becomes powerful as well as calm. Regular sandhya cuts the chain of old samskaras and changes everybody's old situation entirely. It brings purity, atmabhava, devotion and sincerity.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

The traditional sandhya in its complete form is complex and the time required to perform it correctly is lengthy. To get up before sunrise is a challenge for most people, and few will be able to spare the time required for the full upasana. Bearing in mind the challenges of modern society and the need for practicality to ensure regularity and attain maximum results in sadhana, Swami Niranjanananda has given a simplified practice. This version combines the same elements of shuddhi, arghya and japa in a simple formulation. Regular practice will bring the same benefits as the classical upasana, promotion of physical health, vitality, emotional harmony and awakening of the faculties of intuition and wisdom. Regular practice creates a link between the individual, the daily experiences of life and the spiritual dimension. Practising with faith, reverence and humility will help strengthen and intensify this connection.

Before beginning, the physical body should be clean and the mind calm. To perform the pratah sandhya, the direction to face is East. At midday face North, and in the evening for the sayam sandhya, face West. Keep ready two *lotas* or vessels,

one with clean water and the second one empty, which is the arghya patra into which the water is poured.

1. Jal prokshan



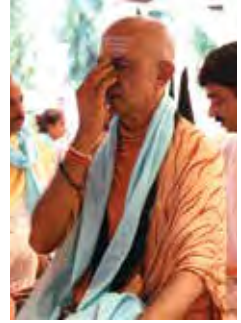
Sprinkle arghya water on the top of the head three times for cleanliness and purity, both internally and externally, while chanting the following mantras to start the sandhya upasana:

ॐ अपवित्रः पवित्रो वा सर्वावस्थां गतोऽपि वा ।
यः स्मरेत्पुण्डरीकाक्षं स बाह्याभ्यन्तरः शुचिः ॥

Om apavitraḥ pavitra vā sarvāvasyāthāṃ gato'pi vā.
Yaḥ smaretpuṇḍarikākṣhaṃ sa bāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ.

2. Pranayama

Nadi shodhana: Place the right hand in nasikagra mudra. Close the right nostril and breathe through the left mentally repeating the mantra below. Hold the breath and mentally repeat the mantra. Open the right nostril and close the left. Exhale through the right nostril repeating the mantra. Practise one round while repeating the mantra once.



ॐ प्रणवस्य परब्रह्म ऋषिः परमात्मा देवता गायत्री छन्दः प्राणायामे
विनियोगः ॥

ब्रह्मणे नमः, विष्णवे नमः, रुद्राय नमः

Om praṇavasya parabrahma ṛṣiḥ paramātmā devatā
gāyatrī chhandāḥ prāṇāyāme viniyogaḥ.
Brahmaṇe namaḥ, viṣṇave namaḥ, rudrāya namaḥ

Surya bheda: Place the right hand in nasikagra mudra. Close the left nostril and breathe through the right mentally repeating the mantra below. Hold the breath

and mentally repeat the mantra. Breathe out through the right nostril repeating the mantra. This is one pranayama. Practise up to 3 rounds.

While inhaling focus on mooladhara chakra and the Brahma granthi, while retaining the breath the awareness is at anahata chakra and the Vishnu granthi, and while exhaling the awareness is at ajna chakra and the Rudra granthi.

ॐ भूः । ॐ भुवः । ॐ स्वः । ॐ महः । ॐ जनः । ॐ तपः । ॐ सत्यं ।
ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं । भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ।
ॐ आपोज्योतीरसोऽमृतं ब्रह्मभूर्भुवःस्वरोम्
Om bhūḥ. Om bhuvah. Om swah. Om mahah. Om janah.
Om tapan. Om satyam.
Om tatsaviturvareṇyam. Bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo
naḥ prachodayāt.
Om āpojyotīraso'mṛtaṁ brahmabhūrbhuvahṣvarom

3. Arghya

Stand facing East. Take water in both palms. Raise the heels slightly and come up on to the toes, and then slowly pour the water down through the tips of the fingers other than the thumb. Alternatively, you can also use a *lota*, an earthen pot, or a *katori*, a cup, for offering water. Water should be offered in one continuous stream while the Gayatri mantra is chanted three times.

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ।
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॐ ॥
Om bhūrbhuvahṣvah. Tatsaviturvareṇyam.
Bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yonaḥ prachodayāt Om.

4. Gayatri mantra japa

During the pratah sandhya the Gayatri japa can be practised standing and facing East until sunrise. After sunrise the japa can be performed either standing or sitting. Use a mala and repeat up to twenty-four mantras.

5. Surya Upasthaanam

Close your eyes and bring the awareness to *bhrumadhya*, the eyebrow centre. At that point visualize the rising sun as a sphere of light in the darkness.

The radiance of the sun is the power of prana that brings health, vitality, energy and positivity to life. The brilliance of the sun is the power of *tapas*, the fire of spiritual aspiration and determination, which protects and guides the aspirant in sadhana. The power of the sun is *jnana*, the spiritual wisdom that removes the darkness and illuminate's life.

Repeat the following mantra three times:

ॐ आ कृष्णेन रजसा वर्त्तमानो निवेशयन्मृतं मर्त्यं च।
हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेनादेवो याति भुवनानि पश्यमन्॥
सूर्य नारायणाय नमः

Om ā kṛṣṇena rajasā varttamāno niveśayannamṛtaṃ
martyaṃ cha.

Hiraṇyayena savitā rathenādevo yāti bhuvanāni paśyaman.
Sūrya nārāyaṇāya namaḥ.

Expand the feeling of the presence of the sun in life, and feel that Surya, the deity of the sun, is bestowing blessings and grace upon you.

Bidding farewell to Surya, let the visualization of the sun slowly fade into chidakasha and return the awareness to the eyebrow centre.

Chant the mantra *Om* three times to end the practice.



SWAMI SIVANANDA'S INSTRUCTIONS ON SANDHYA

Diet

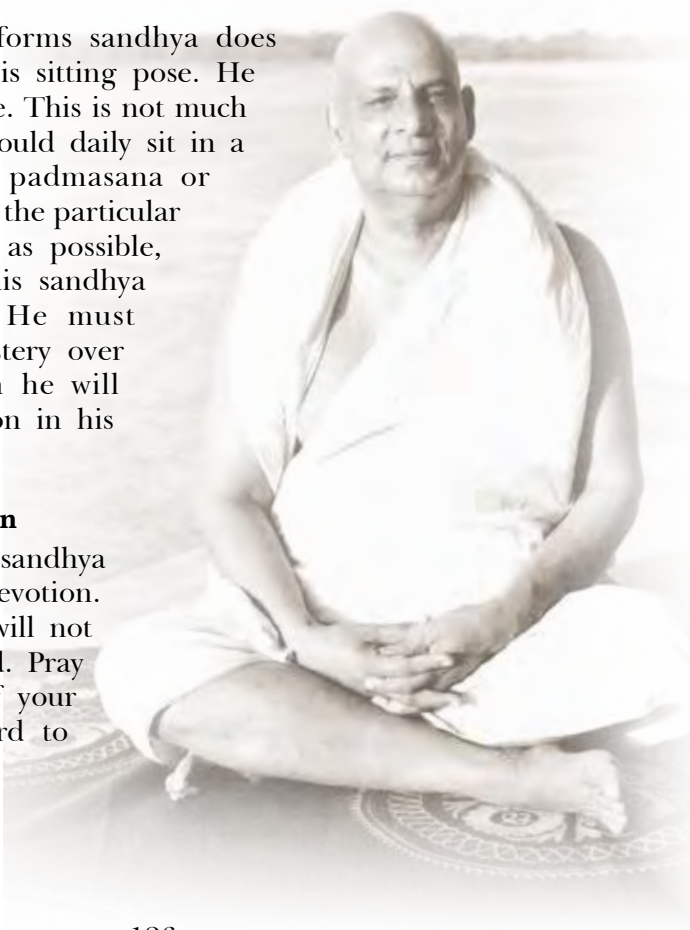
If you want to learn this science, you must be careful about your diet. Take regular and light sattvic food. Human beings are much influenced by diet. See the difference between a small lion and a big elephant. You will be able to improve yourself by adjusting your diet. Idleness is due to a variety of rich diet only. Therefore, be strict in your daily diet. You will be ever active and strong.

Sitting pose

A man who performs sandhya does not care about his sitting pose. He sits in any posture. This is not much beneficial. He should daily sit in a perfect posture, padmasana or sukhasana, facing the particular direction. As far as possible, he must finish his sandhya in one sitting. He must have perfect mastery over the asana. Then he will have concentration in his sandhya.

Faith and devotion

You must do your sandhya with faith and devotion. Mere repetition will not bring much good. Pray from the core of your heart to the Lord to forgive your sins.



ARGHYA VIDHI

Sit facing East at sunrise or midday. Face West at the time of sunset.

Have a lota ready containing water, red sandal and saffron. If these are not available, plain water will suffice.

Chant the mantra *Om* three times.

Perform achamana, sipping water three times.

Perform marjanam, sprinkling the body with water.

Offer red flowers on the ground in front of you, while you chant the following mantra and wave incense five times.

ॐ व्रतनयं व्रतिनो वर्द्धयन्ति देवा मनुष्याः पितरश्च सर्वे ।
तस्यादित्यस्य प्रसवमनाम हेयस्तेजसः प्रथममजो विभाति ॥

Om vratanayaṃ vratino varddhayanti devā manuṣyāḥ
pitaraścha sarve.
Tasyādityasya prasavamanāma heyastejasah
prathamamajo vibhāti.

Holding the lota to your head, repeat the following mantra.

एहि सूर्य सहस्रांशो तेजोराशे जगत्पते ।
अनुकंपय मां भक्तं गृहाणार्घं दिवाकर ॥

Ehi sūrya sahasrāṃśo tejorāśe jagatpate.
Anukampaya māṃ bhaktaṃ grhāṇārgḥaṃ divākara.

Looking at the sun, slowly pour the water visualizing and feeling that you are offering the water into the sun. Repeat the following mantra three times while pouring the water. Then place the lota on the ground.

ॐ नमो भगवते आदित्याय वरिष्ठाय वरेण्याय ब्रह्मब्रह्मलोकैककर्त्रे ।
ॐ ईशानाय पुराणाय पुराणपुरुषाय च ॥
ॐ सोमाय च ऋग्यजुःसामाथर्वणे च ॥
ॐ भूः ॐ भुवः ॐ स्वः ॐ महः ॐ जनः ॐ तपः ॐ सत्यम् ।
ब्रह्मणे मध्यपरत आदित्यायेति स्वाहा ॥

Om namo bhagavate ādityāya variṣṭāya vareṇyāya
brahmabrahmalokaikakartre.

Om īśānāya purāṇāya purāṇapurusaḥ cha.

Om bhūḥ om bhuvaḥ om svaḥ om mahaḥ om janaḥ om
tapaḥ om satyam.

Brahmaṇe madhyaparata ādityāyeti svāhā.

Sit quietly and repeat the following mantra 27 times:

ॐ भूर्भुवस्स्वस्तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।

धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Om bhūrbhuvassvastatsaviturvareṇyaṁ bhargo devasya
dhīmahi.

Dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt.

When performing arghya in the morning or midday re-
peat the following mantra once:

पूर्वाह्णेऽनेनमंत्रेण मध्याह्ने चाप्यनेन तु॥

ॐ नमो ज्वालामालाय तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः।

दिवीव चक्षुराततं सायाह्ने चाप्यनेन तु॥

Pūrvāhṇe'nenamantreṇa madhyāhne chāpyanena tu.

Om namo jvālāmālāya tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā
paśyanti sūrayaḥ.

Divīva chakṣurātataṁ sāyāhne chāpyanena tu.

In the evening repeat the following mantra once:

ॐ नमो वरुणाय

ॐ आ कृष्णेन रजसा वर्त्तमानो निवेशयन्मृतं मर्त्यं च ।

हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेनादेवो याति भुवनानि पश्यन् ॥

Om namo varuṇāya

Om ā kṛṣṇena rajasā varttamāno niveśayannamṛtaṁ
martyaṁ cha.

Hiraṇyayena savitā rathenādevo yāti bhuvanāni paśyaman.

Wave incense, perform namaskara and offer your pranam.
Chant the mantra *Om* three times.

The benefits of this ancient vidhi have been declared in the scriptures. Those who are ailing and sick will be liberated from the illness, those who seek prosperity will attain it, and those who seek learning will be blessed with jnana. Regular practice promotes health, vitality and longevity. Practising with faith leads to the attainment of all desires, brings joy and happiness. The person who performs with due effort and sankalpa attains fruition and success in all works. Those who perform with one-pointed concentration, free from distraction and dissipation of awareness attain the same merit of performing the Ashwamedha yajna. Regular practice by one who is free from misery and fear, whose mind is balanced, calm and centred leads to purity, intelligence and wisdom. Ultimately, this vidya reveals the experience of the transcendental Brahman and liberation.



Saurya tantra believes that each and every part or function of the body has a specific frequency. During sickness, the electromagnetic field of the body emits a frequency that is different from that of a healthy body. This change in frequency is experienced in the form of health, vitality and stamina, or as dullness, lethargy, weakness and sickness. However, that is only one's subjective experience; in reality, the frequencies of the body keep on changing every moment. Mantras can restore balance in the frequencies of the electromagnetic or pranic field in the body, and this in turn removes all types of defects, problems and illnesses.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

SAURYA TANTRA SADHANA

Repetition of the Surya Mantra bestows health, long life, vigour, vitality, *tejas* or brilliance. It removes all diseases of the body and the eye. No enemy can do any harm. Repetition of *Aditya Hridayam* in the early morning, is highly beneficial. Lord Rama conquered Ravana through the repetition of *Aditya Hridayam* imparted by Agastya Rishi.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Following the ancient scriptures and vidhi of Saurya Tantra, this sadhana has been given by Swami Niranjanananda for initiated sadhakas. Practice of this sadhana should be done with the sankalpa to access, activate and align oneself with the shakti, the energy, power and benevolence of Surya. This sadhana should be performed on Sundays, or on the Sankranti day.

Morning

Asana

Surya namaskara maximum seven rounds

Pranayama

- Nadi shodhana maximum seven rounds
- Surya bheda maximum seven rounds

Argyha

Perform the vidhi of arghya with calm and concentrated mind.

Stotra chanting

- *Aditya Hridayam* – 3 times
- *Surya Mandalashtakam* – once
- *Surya Ashtakam* – once

By invoking the mantras of Surya, it becomes possible to overcome different obstacles in life. When Rama was about to fight his final battle with Ravana, Sage Agastya appeared on the scene and initiated him into the mantra of Surya, the famous *Aditya Hridayam Stotram*. He said, “Rama, you will be victorious only when you have repeated this mantra three times.” Thus, this stotra can be used by anyone to overcome difficulties and obstacles. When chanted three times at the time of sunrise every day, everything will change: not only one’s mind-set, ideas, thoughts and perceptions, but even situations that one encounters in life.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Evening

Japa

One mala of the mantra

ॐ घृणि सूर्य आदित्याय

Om ghr̥ṇi sūrya ādityāya

Havan

Maha Mrityunjaya mantra – 27 times



Hridaya Pushpam meditation

To be done before sleep.

हृदयं तु विजानीयाद्विश्वस्यायतनं महत् ।
तस्य तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा प्रत्युवाच महेश्वरः ॥1॥
शृणु यत्नेन वचनं पुष्पाणि कथयामि ते ।
अहिंसा प्रथमं पुष्पं तथा चेन्द्रियनिग्रहः ॥2॥
धृतिपुष्पं क्षमापुष्पं शौचपुष्पं च पञ्चमम् ।
अक्रोधः षष्ठपुष्पं तु ह्रीपुष्पं चैव सप्तमम् ॥3॥
सत्यं चैवाष्टमं पुष्पमभिः प्रीयेत वै शिवः ।
एतान्यष्टौ च पुष्पाणि चाक्षयान्यव्ययानि च ॥4॥

Hṛdayaṃ tu vijānīyādviśvasyāyatanam mahat.
Tasya tadvachanaṃ śrutvā pratyuvācha maheśvaraḥ. (1)
Śṛṇu yatnena vachanaṃ puṣpāṇi kathayāmi te.
Ahimsā prathamam puṣpaṃ tathā chendriyanigraḥ. (2)
Dhṛtipuṣpaṃ kshamāpuṣpaṃ śauchapuṣpaṃ cha
pañchamam.
Akrodhaḥ ṣaṣṭapuṣpaṃ tu hrīpuṣpaṃ chaiva saptamam. (3)
Satyaṃ chaivāṣṭamam puṣpamebhiḥ prīyeta vai śivaḥ.
Etānyaṣṭau cha puṣpāṇi chākṣayaṇyavyayāni cha. (4)

Sit quietly in a meditative asana with the eyes closed.
Withdraw the senses and mind from the external world.
Become aware of the chest area, the space inside the rib cage.
Develop awareness of *hridayakash*, the space of the heart
in the centre of the chest.

Inside the heart space there is a glowing Shivalinga. This
is the true abode of all beings and the seat of the divine
consciousness within you.

This lingam should be worshipped with eight different
flowers. Each flower represents a feeling, your own heart-
felt sentiment, that you create and experience.

Visualize and connect with the feeling of each flower as
you offer it.

The first flower is ahimsa, non-violence.

The second is indriya nigraha, restraint of the senses.

The third flower is dhriti, patience and tolerance.
 The fourth flower is kshama, forgiveness.
 The fifth flower is shaucha, purity at all levels.
 The sixth flower is akrodha, the absence of anger
 The seventh flower is hri, modesty and humility.
 The eighth flower is satyam, truthfulness.
 These flowers are indestructible and eternal. They represent the highest qualities of your spiritual self.
 Pray for illumination and the awakening of spiritual consciousness.
 Let the image of the lingam and the flowers dissolve into the space of the heart.
 Become aware of the physical body sitting in a meditative asana.
 Sit quietly for a few minutes.
 Chant the mantra *Om* three times
 Open the eyes.



The greatest and the highest abhisheka is to pour the waters of pure love on the atmalinga of the lotus of the heart. The external abhisheka with various objects will help the growth of devotion and adoration for Shiva and eventually lead to internal abhisheka with pure abundant flow of love.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Appendices

Surya Stotras

आदित्य-हृदयम्

राम राम महाबाहो शृणु गुह्यं सनातनम् ।
येन सर्वानरीन् वत्स समरे विजयिष्यसे ॥ 1 ॥
आदित्यहृदयं पुण्यं सर्वशत्रुविनाशनम् ।
जयावहं जपं नित्यमक्षयं परमं शिवम् ॥ 2 ॥
सर्वमंगल-माङ्गल्यं सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ।
चिन्ताशोक-प्रशमनमायुर्वर्धनमुत्तमम् ॥ 3 ॥
रश्मिमन्तं समुद्यन्तं देवासुरनमस्कृतम् ।
पूजयस्व विवस्वन्तं भास्करं भुवनेश्वरम् ॥ 4 ॥
सर्वदेवात्मको ह्येष तेजस्वी रश्मिभावनः ।
एष देवासुरगणान् लोकान् पाति गभस्तिभिः ॥ 5 ॥
एष ब्रह्मा च विष्णुश्च शिवः स्कन्दः प्रजापतिः ।
महेन्द्रो धनदः कालो यमः सोमो ह्यपां पतिः ॥ 6 ॥
पितरो वसवः साध्या अश्विनौ मरुतो मनुः ।
वायुर्वह्निः प्रजाप्राण ऋतुकर्ता प्रभाकरः ॥ 7 ॥
आदित्यः सविता सूर्यः खगः पूषा गभस्तिमान् ।
सुवर्णसदृशो भानुर्हिरण्यरेता दिवाकरः ॥ 8 ॥
हरिदश्वः सहस्रार्चिः सप्तसप्तिर्मरीचिमान् ।
तिमिरोन्मथनः शम्भुस्त्वष्टा मार्तण्ड अंशुमान् ॥ 9 ॥
हिरण्यगर्भः शिशिरस्तपनो भास्करो रविः ।
अग्निगर्भोऽदितेः पुत्रः शंखः शिशिरनाशनः ॥ 10 ॥

व्योमनाथस्तमोभेदी ऋग्यजुस्सामपारगः ।
 घनवृष्टिपां मित्रो विन्ध्यवीथीप्लवंगमः ॥ 11 ॥
 आतपी मण्डली मृत्युः पिंगलः सर्वतापनः ।
 कविर्विश्वो महातेजा रक्तः सर्वभवोद्भवः ॥ 12 ॥
 नक्षत्रग्रहताराणामधिपो विश्वभावनः ।
 तेजसामपि तेजस्वी द्वादशात्मन्मोऽस्तुते ॥ 13 ॥
 नमः पूर्वाय गिरये पश्चिमायाद्रये नमः ।
 ज्योतिर्गणानां पतये दिनाधिपतये नमः ॥ 14 ॥
 जयाय जयभद्राय हर्यश्वाय नमो नमः ।
 नमो नमः सहस्रांशो आदित्याय नमो नमः ॥ 15 ॥
 नम उग्राय वीराय सारंगाय नमो नमः ।
 नमः पद्मप्रबोधाय मार्त्तण्डाय नमो नमः ॥ 16 ॥
 ब्रह्मेशानाच्युतेशाय सूर्यायादित्यवर्चसे ।
 भास्वते सर्वभक्षाय रौद्राय वपुषे नमः ॥ 17 ॥
 तमोघ्नाय हिमघ्नाय शत्रुघ्नायामितात्मने ।
 कृतघ्नघ्नाय देवाय ज्योतिषां पतये नमः ॥ 18 ॥
 तप्तचामीकराभाय वह्नये विश्वकर्मणे ।
 नमस्तमोऽभिनिघ्नाय रुचये लोकसाक्षिणे ॥ 19 ॥
 नाशयत्येष वै भूतं तदेव सृजति प्रभुः ।
 पायत्येष तपत्येष वर्षत्येष गभस्तिभिः ॥ 20 ॥
 एष सुप्तेषु जागर्ति भूतेषु परिनिष्ठितः ।
 एष एवाग्निहोत्रं च फलं चैवाग्निहोत्रिणाम् ॥ 21 ॥
 देवाश्च क्रतवश्चैव क्रतूनां फलमेव च ।
 यानि कृत्यानि लोकेषु सर्व एष रविः प्रभुः ॥ 22 ॥
 एनमापत्सु कृच्छ्रेषु कान्तारेषु भयेषु च ।
 कीर्तयन् पुरुषः कश्चिन्नावसीदति राघव ॥ 23 ॥
 पूजयस्वैनमेकाग्रो देवदेवं जगत्पतिम् ।
 एतत् त्रिगुणितं जप्त्वा युद्धेषु विजयिष्यसि ॥ 24 ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ हरिः ॐ॥

Āditya-hṛdayam

1. Rāma rāma mahābāho sṛṇu guhyaṃ sanātanam.
Yena sarvānarīn vatsa samare vijayiṣyase.
2. Ādityahṛdayaṃ puṇyaṃ sarvaśatruvināśanam.
Jayāvahaṃ japaṃ nityamakṣayaṃ paramaṃ śivam.
3. Sarvamaṅgala-māṅgalyaṃ sarvapāpapaṇāśanam.
Chintāśoka-praśamanamāyurvardhanamuttamam.
4. Raśmimantaṃ samudyantaṃ devāsuraṇaṃ maskṛtam.
Pūjayasva vivasvantaṃ bhāskaraṃ bhuvaneśvaram.
5. Sarvadevātmako hyeṣa tejasvī raśmibhāvanaḥ.
Eṣa devāsuraṇān lokān pāti gabhastibhiḥ.
6. Eṣa brahmā cha viṣṇuścha śivaḥ skandaḥ prajāpatiḥ.
Mahendro dhanadaḥ kālo yamaḥ somo hyapāṃ patiḥ.
7. Pitara vasavaḥ sādhyā aśvinau maruto manuḥ.
Vāyurvahniḥ prajāprāṇa ṛtukartā prabhākarah.
8. Ādityaḥ savitā sūryaḥ khagaḥ pūṣā gabhastimān.
Suvarṇasadrśo bhānurhiraṇyaretā divākarah.
9. Haridaśvaḥ sahasrārchiḥ saptasaptirmarīchimān.
Timironmathanaḥ śaṃbhustvaṣṭā mārtaṇḍa aṃśumān.
10. Hiraṇyagarbhaḥ śīśirastapano bhāskaro raviḥ.
Agnigarbho'diteḥ putraḥ śaṅkhaḥ śīśiranāśanaḥ.
11. Vyomanāsthastamobhedī ṛgyajussāmapāragah.
Ghanavṛṣṭirapāṃ mitro vindhyavīthīplavaṅgamaḥ.
12. Ātapī maṇḍalī mṛtyuḥ piṅgalaḥ sarvatāpanaḥ.
Kavirviśvo mahātejā raktaḥ sarvabhavodbhavaḥ.
13. Nakṣatragrahaṭārāṇāmādhipo viśvabhāvanaḥ.
Tejasāmapi tejasvī dvādaśātmannamo'stute.
14. Namaḥ pūrvāya giraye paśchimāyādraye namaḥ.
Jyotirgaṇānāṃ pataye dinādhipataye namaḥ.
15. Jayāya jayabhadrāya haryaśvāya namo namaḥ.
Namo namaḥ sahasrāṃśo ādityāya namo namaḥ.
16. Namaḥ ugrāya vīrāya sārāṅgāya namo namaḥ.
Namaḥ padmaprabodhāya mārtaṇḍāya namo namaḥ.
17. Brahmeśānāchyuteśāya sūryāyādityavarchase.
Bhāsvate sarvabhakṣāya raudrāya vapuṣe namaḥ.



18. Tamoghnāya himaghnāya śatrughnāyāmitātmane.
Kṛtaghnaghnāya devāya jyotiṣāṃ pataye namaḥ.
19. Taptachāmīkarābhāya vahnaye viśvakarmaṇe.
Namastamo'bhinighnāya ruchaye lokasākṣiṇe.
20. Nāśayatyeṣa vai bhūtaṃ tadeva sṛjati prabhuḥ.
Pāyatyeṣa tapatyeṣa varṣatyeṣa gabhastibhiḥ.
21. Eṣa supteṣu jāgartti bhūteṣu pariniṣṭhitaḥ.
Eṣa evāgnihotraṃ cha phalaṃ chaivāgnihotriṇām.
22. Devāścha kratavaśchaiva kratūnāṃ phalameva cha.
Yāni kṛtyāni lokeṣu sarva eṣa raviḥ prabhuḥ.
23. Enamāpatsu kṛchchreṣu kāntāreṣu bhayeṣu cha.
Kīrtayan puruṣaḥ kaśchinnāvasīdati rāghava.
24. Pūjayasvainamekāgro devadevaṃ jagatpatim.
Etat triguṇitaṃ japtvā yuddheṣu vijayiṣyasi.

Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ. Hariḥ om

सूर्यमंडलाष्टकं

नमः सवित्रे जगदेकचक्षुषे जगत्प्रसूती स्थितिनाशहेतवे ।
त्रयीमयाय त्रिगुणात्मधारिणे विरञ्चि नारायण शङ्करात्मन् ॥ 1 ॥

यन्मण्डलं दीप्तिकरं विशालं रत्नप्रभं तीव्रमनादिरूपम् ।
दारिद्र्यदुःखक्षयकारणं च पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 2 ॥

यन्मण्डलं देव गणैः सुपूजितं विप्रैः स्तुतं भावनमुक्ति कोविदम् ।
तं देवदेवं प्रणमामि सूर्य पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 3 ॥

यन्मण्डलं ज्ञानघनं त्वगम्यं त्रैलोक्यपूज्यं त्रिगुणात्मरूपम् ।
समस्त तेजोमय दिव्यरूपं पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 4 ॥

यन्मण्डलं गूढमतिप्रबोधं धर्मस्य वृद्धिं कुरुते जनानाम् ।
यत्सर्वपापक्षयकारणं च पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 5 ॥

यन्मण्डलं व्याधिविनाशदक्षं यद्व्यजुःसामसु सम्प्रगीतम् ।
प्रकाशितं येन भूर्भुवः स्वः पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 6 ॥

यन्मण्डलं वेदविदो वदन्ति गायन्ति यच्चारणसिद्धसङ्घाः ।
यद्योगिनो योगजुषां च सङ्घाः पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 7 ॥

यन्मण्डलं सर्वजनेषु पूजितं ज्योतिश्चकुर्यादिह मर्त्यलोके ।
यत्कालकल्पक्षयकारणं च पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 8 ॥

यन्मण्डलं विश्वसृजं प्रसीदमुत्पत्तिरक्षा प्रलयप्रगल्भम् ।
यस्मिञ्जगत्संहरतेऽखिलं च पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 9 ॥

यन्मण्डलं सर्वगतस्य विष्णोरात्मा परं धाम विशुद्धतत्त्वम् ।
सूक्ष्मान्तैर्योगपथानुगम्ये पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 10 ॥

यन्मण्डलं वेदविदो विदन्ति गायन्ति तच्चारणसिद्धसङ्घाः ।
यन्मण्डलं वेदविदो स्मरन्ति पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 11 ॥

यन्मण्डलं वेदविदोपगीतं यद्योगिनां योगपथानुगम्यम् ।
तत्सर्ववेदं प्रणमामि सूर्य पुनातु मां तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ॥ 12 ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ हरिः ॐ॥

Sūryamaṇḍalāṣṭakam

1. Namaḥ savitre jagadekachakṣuṣe jagatprasūtī sthitināśahetave.
Trayīmayāya triguṇātmadhārīṇe virañchi nārāyaṇa śaṅkarātman.
2. Yanmaṇḍalam dīptikaram viśālam ratnaprabham
tīvramanādirūpam.
Dāridryaduḥkhakṣayakāraṇam cha punātu māṃ
tatsaviturvareṇyam.
3. Yanmaṇḍalam deva gaṇaiḥ supūjitam vipraiḥ stutam
bhāvanamukti kovidam.
Taṃ devadevaṃ praṇamāmi sūryam punātu māṃ
tatsaviturvareṇyam.
4. Yanmaṇḍalam jñānaghanam tvagamyam trailokyapūjyam
triguṇātmārūpam.
Samasta tejomaya divyarūpam punātu māṃ tatsaviturvareṇyam.
5. Yanmaṇḍalam gūḍhamatiprabodham dharmasya vṛddhiṃ kurute
janānām.
Yatsarvapāpakṣayakāraṇam cha punātu māṃ tatsaviturvareṇyam.
6. Yanmaṇḍalam vyādhivināśadakṣam yadṛgyajuḥsāmasu
sampragītam.
Prakāśitam yena bhūrbhuvah svaḥ punātu māṃ
tatsaviturvareṇyam.
7. Yanmaṇḍalam vedavido vadanti gāyanti
yachchāraṇasiddhasaṅghāḥ.
Yadyogino yogajuṣāṃ cha saṅghāḥ punātu māṃ
tatsaviturvareṇyam.
8. Yanmaṇḍalam sarvajaneṣu pūjitam jyotiśchakuryādiha martyaloke.
Yatkālakalpakṣayakāraṇam cha punātu māṃ tatsaviturvareṇyam.
9. Yanmaṇḍalam viśvasṛjam prasīdamutpattirakṣā
pralayaapragalbham.
Yasmiñjagatsaṃharate'khilam cha punātu māṃ
tatsaviturvareṇyam.



10. Yanmaṇḍalaṃ sarvagatasya viṣṇorātmā paraṃ dhāma
viśuddhatattvam.
Sūkṣmāntarairyogapathānugamye punātu māṃ
tatsaviturvareṇyam.
11. Yanmaṇḍalaṃ vedavido vidanti gāyanti
tachchāraṇasiddhasaṅghāḥ.
Yanmaṇḍalaṃ vedavido smaranti punātu māṃ
tatsaviturvareṇyam.
12. Yanmaṇḍalaṃ vedavidopagītaṃ yodyogināṃ
yogapathānugamyam.
Tatsarvavedaṃ praṇamāmi sūryaṃ punātu māṃ
tatsaviturvareṇyam.

Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ. Hariḥ om

सूर्याष्टकम्

आदिदेव नमस्तुभ्यं प्रसीद मम भास्कर ।
दिवाकर नमस्तुभ्यं प्रभाकर नमोऽस्तु ते ॥ 1 ॥

सप्ताश्वरथमारूढं प्रचण्डं कश्यपात्मजम् ।
श्वेतपद्मधरं देवं तं सूर्यं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ 2 ॥

लोहितं रथमारूढं सर्वलोक-पितामहम् ।
महापापहरं देवं तं सूर्यं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ 3 ॥

त्रैगुण्यं च महाशूरं ब्रह्मविष्णुमहेश्वरम् ।
महापापहरं देवं तं सूर्यं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ 4 ॥

बृंहितं तेजसः पुञ्जं वायुमाकाशमेव च ।
प्रभुं च सर्वलोकानां तं सूर्यं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ 5 ॥

बन्धूकपुष्पसंकाशं हारकुण्डलभूषितम् ।
एकचक्रधरं देवं तं सूर्यं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ 6 ॥

तं सूर्यं जगदीशानं महातेजःप्रदीपनम् ।
महापापहरं देवं तं सूर्यं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ 7 ॥

तं सूर्यं जगतां नाथं ज्ञानविज्ञानमोक्षदम् ।
महापापहरं देवं तं सूर्यं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ 8 ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ हरिः ॐ ॥

Sūryāṣṭakam

1. Ādideva namastubhyaṃ prasīda mama bhāskara.
Divākara namastubhyaṃ prabhākara namo'stu te.
2. Saptāśvarathamārūḍhaṃ prachaṇḍaṃ kaśyapātmajam.
Śvetapadmadharaṃ devaṃ taṃ sūryaṃ praṇamāmyaham.
3. Lohitaṃ rathamārūḍhaṃ sarvaloka-pitāmaham.
Mahāpāpaharaṃ devaṃ taṃ sūryaṃ praṇamāmyaham.
4. Traiguṇyaṃ cha mahāśūraṃ brahmaviṣṇumaheśvaram.
Mahāpāpaharaṃ devaṃ taṃ sūryaṃ praṇamāmyaham.
5. Bṛṃhitaṃ tejasah puñjaṃ vāyumākāśameva cha.
Prabhūṃ cha sarvalokānāṃ taṃ sūryaṃ praṇamāmyaham.
6. Bandhūkapuṣpasaṅkāśaṃ hārakuṇḍalabhūṣitam.
Ekachakradharaṃ devaṃ taṃ sūryaṃ praṇamāmyaham.
7. Taṃ sūryaṃ jagadīśānaṃ mahātejaḥpradīpanam.
Mahāpāpaharaṃ devaṃ taṃ sūryaṃ praṇamāmyaham.
8. Taṃ sūryaṃ jagatām nāthaṃ jñānavijnānamokṣadam.
Mahāpāpaharaṃ devaṃ taṃ sūryaṃ praṇamāmyaham.

Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ. Hariḥ om

Appendix 2

Surya Mantras

JAL PROKSHAN MANTRA

ॐ अपवित्रः पवित्रो वा सर्वावस्थां गतोऽपि वा ।
यः स्मरेत्पुण्डरीकाक्षं स बाह्याभ्यन्तरः शुचिः ॥

Om apavitraḥ pavitra vā sarvāvasthāṃ gato'pi vā.
Yaḥ smaretpuṇḍarīkāṣaṃ sa bāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ.

PRANAYAMA MANTRAS

Nadi shodhana

ॐ प्रणवस्य परब्रह्म ऋषिः परमात्मा देवता गायत्री छन्दः प्राणायामे
विनियोगः ॥
ब्रह्मणे नमः, विष्णवे नमः, रुद्राय नमः ॥

Om praṇavasya parabrahma ṛṣiḥ paramātmā devatā
gāyatrī chhandaḥ prāṇāyāme viniyogaḥ.
Brahmaṇe namaḥ, viṣṇave namaḥ, rudrāya namaḥ

Surya bedha

ॐ भूः । ॐ भुवः । ॐ स्वः । ॐ महः । ॐ जनः । ॐ तपः । ॐ सत्यं ।
ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं । भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ।
ॐ आपोज्योतीरसोऽमृतं ब्रह्मभूर्भुवःस्वरोम् ।

Om bhūḥ. Om bhuvah. Om swah. Om mahaḥ. Om janah.
Om tapaḥ. Om satyaṃ.
Om tatsaviturvareṇyaṃ. Bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo
naḥ prachodayāt.
Om āpojyotīraso'mṛtaṃ brahmabhūrbhuvahḥsvarom

GAYATRI MANTRA

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ।
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॐ ॥

Om bhūrbhuvahḥ svah. Tatsaviturvareṇyam.
Bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt

SURYA UPASTHAANAM MANTRA

ॐ आ कृष्णेन रजसा वर्त्तमानो निवेशयन्नमृतं मर्त्यं च।
हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेनादेवो याति भुवनानि पश्यमन्॥
सूर्य नारायणाय नमः

Om ā kṛṣṇena rajasā varttamāno niveśayannamṛtaṃ
martyaṃ cha.
Hiraṇyayena savitā rathenādevo yāti bhuvanāni paśyaman.
Sūrya nārāyaṇāya namaḥ.

ARGHYA VIDHI MANTRAS

ॐ व्रतनयं व्रतिनो वर्द्धयन्ति देवा मनुष्याः पितरश्च सर्वे ।
तस्यादित्यस्य प्रसवमनाम हेयस्तेजसः प्रथममजो विभाति ॥

Om vratanayaṃ vratino varddhayanti devā manuṣyāḥ
pitaraścha sarve.
Tasyādityasya prasavamanāma heyastejasah
prathamamajo vibhāti.

एहि सूर्य सहस्रांशो तेजोराशे जगत्पते ।
अनुकंपय मां भक्तं गृहाणार्घं दिवाकर ॥

Ehi sūrya sahasrāṁśo tejorāśe jagatpate.
Anukampaya mām bhaktaṁ grhāṇārghaṁ divākara.

ॐ नमो भगवते आदित्याय वरिष्ठाय वरेण्याय ब्रह्मब्रह्मलोकैककर्त्रे ।
ॐ ईशानाय पुराणाय पुराणपुरुषाय च ॥
ॐ सोमाय च ऋग्यजुःसामाथर्वणे च ॥
ॐ भूः ॐ भुवः ॐ स्वः ॐ महः ॐ जनः ॐ तपः ॐ सत्यम् ।
ब्रह्मणे मध्यपरत आदित्यायेति स्वाहा ॥

Om namo bhagavate ādityāya varīṣṭhāya vareṇyāya
brahmabrahmalokaikakartre.
Om īśānāya purāṇāya purāṇapuruṣāya cha.
Om bhūḥ om bhuvāḥ om svaḥ om mahaḥ om janaḥ om
tapaḥ om satyam.
Brahmaṇe madhyaparata ādityāyeti svāhā.

ॐ भूर्भुवस्वस्तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Om bhūrbhuvassvastatsaviturvareṇyaṁ bhargo devasya
dhīmahi.
Dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt.

पूर्वाह्णेऽनेनमंत्रेण मध्याह्ने चाप्यनेन तु॥

ॐ नमो ज्वालामालाय तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः ।
दिवीव चक्षुराततं सायाह्ने चाप्यनेन तु॥

Pūrvāhṇe'nenamantreṇa madhyāhne chāpyanena tu.
Om namo jvālāmālāya tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā
paśyanti sūrayaḥ.
Divīva chakṣurātataṁ sāyāhne chāpyanena tu.

HRIDAYA PUSHPAM MEDITATION MANTRAS

To be done before sleep.

हृदयं तु विजानीयाद्विश्वस्यायतनं महत् ।
तस्य तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा प्रत्युवाच महेश्वरः ॥1॥
शृणु यत्नेन वचनं पुष्पाणि कथयामि ते।
अहिंसा प्रथमं पुष्पं तथा चेन्द्रियनिग्रहः ॥2॥
धृतिपुष्पं क्षमापुष्पं शौचपुष्पं च पञ्चमम् ।
अक्रोधः षष्ठपुष्पं तु ह्रीपुष्पं चैव सप्तमम् ॥3॥
सत्यं चैवाष्टमं पुष्पमेभिः प्रीयेत वै शिवः ।
एतान्यष्टौ च पुष्पाणि चाक्षयान्यव्ययानि च ॥4॥

Hṛdayaṃ tu vijāṇīyādvīśvasyāyatanam mahat.
Tasya tadvachanam śrutvā pratyuvācha maheśvaraḥ. (1)

Śṛṇu yatnena vachanam puṣpāṇi kathayāmi te.
Ahimsā prathamam puṣpam tathā chendriyanigrahaḥ. (2)

Dhṛtipuṣpam kshamāpuṣpam śauchapuṣpam cha
pañchamam.
Akrodhaḥ ṣaṣṭapuṣpam tu hrīpuṣpam chaiva saptamam. (3)

Satyaṃ chaivāṣṭamam puṣpamebhiḥ prīyeta vai śivaḥ.
Etānyaṣṭau cha puṣpāṇi chākṣayaṇyavyayāni cha. (4)



Surya Upanishad

सूर्योपनिषत् सूर्याथर्वशीर्षम् च

सूदितस्वातिरिक्तारिसूरिनन्दात्मभावितम् ।

सूर्यनारायणाकारं नौमि चित्सूर्यवैभवम् ॥

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः । भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः । स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः । स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः । स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः । स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः । स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

हरिः ॐ अथ सूर्याथर्वाङ्गिरसं व्याख्यास्यामः ।

ब्रह्मा ऋषिः । गायत्री छन्दः । आदित्यो देवता । हंसः सोऽहमग्निनारायणयुक्तं बीजम् । हल्लेखा शक्तिः । वियदादिसर्गसंयुक्तं कीलकम् ।

चतुर्विधपुरुषार्थसिद्ध्यर्थे विनियोगः ।

षट्स्वरारूढेन बीजेन षडङ्गं रक्ताम्बुजसंस्थितम् ।

सप्ताश्वरथिनं हिरण्यवर्णं चतुर्भुजं पद्मद्वयाभयवरदहस्तं कालचक्रप्रणेतारं श्रीसूर्य-
नारायणं य एवं वेद स वै ब्राह्मणः ।

ॐ भूर्भुवःसुवः । ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ।

सूर्य आत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च । सूर्याद्वै खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । सूर्याद्यज्ञः

पर्जन्योऽन्नमात्मा नमस्त आदित्य ।

त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं कर्मकर्तासि । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं विष्णुरसि ।

त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं रुद्रोऽसि ।

त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षमृगसि । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं यजुरसि । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं सामासि । त्वमेव

प्रत्यक्षमथर्वासि । त्वमेव सर्वं छन्दोऽसि ।

आदित्याद्वायुर्जायते । आदित्याद्भूमिर्जायते । आदित्यादापो जायन्ते ।
 आदित्याज्ज्योतिर्जायते । आदित्यादव्योम दिशो जायन्ते । आदित्याद्देवा
 जायन्ते । आदित्याद्वेदा जायन्ते ।
 आदित्यो वा एष एतन्मण्डलं तपति । असावादित्यो ब्रह्म ।
 आदित्योऽन्तःकरणमनोबुद्धिचित्ताहङ्काराः । आदित्यो वै व्यानः
 समानोदानोऽपानः प्राणः ।
 आदित्यो वै श्रोत्रत्वक्चक्षूरसनघ्राणाः । आदित्यो वै वाक्पाणिपादपायूपस्थाः ।
 आदित्यो वै शब्दस्पर्शरूपरसगन्धाः । आदित्यो वै
 वचनादानागमनविसर्गानन्दाः ।
 आनन्दमयो ज्ञानमयो विज्ञानानमय आदित्यः । नमो मित्राय भानवे मृत्योर्मा
 पाहि ।
 भ्राजिष्णवे विश्वहेतवे नमः । सूर्याद्भवन्ति भूतानि सूर्येण पालितानि तु ।
 सूर्ये लयं प्राप्नुवन्ति यः सूर्यः सोऽहमेव च । चक्षुर्नो देवः सविता चक्षुर्न उत
 पर्वतः ।
 चक्षुर्धाता दधातु नः । आदित्याय विद्महे सहस्रकिरणाय धीमहि । तन्नः सूर्यः
 प्रचोदयात् ।
 सविता पश्चात्तात्सविता पूरस्तात्सवितोत्तरात्तात्सविताधरात्तात् ।
 सविता नः सुवतु सर्वतांति सविता नो रासतां दीर्घमायुः ।
 ॐ इत्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म । घृणिरिति द्वे अक्षरे । सूर्य इत्यक्षरद्वयम् । आदित्य इति
 त्रीण्यक्षराणि ।
 एतस्यैव सूर्यस्याष्टाक्षरो मनुः । यः सदाहरहर्जपति स वै ब्राह्मणो भवति स वै
 ब्राह्मणो भवति ।
 सूर्याभिमुखो जप्त्वा महाव्याधिभयात्प्रमुच्यते । अलक्ष्मीर्नश्यति ।
 अभक्ष्यभक्षणात्पूतो भवति ।
 अगम्यागमनात्पूतो भवति । पतितसम्भाषणात्पूतो भवति ।
 असत्सम्भाषणात्पूतो भवति ।
 मध्याह्ने सूर्याभिमुखः पठेत् । सद्योत्पन्नपञ्चमहापातकात्प्रमुच्यते ।
 सैषां सावित्रीं विद्यां न किञ्चिदपि न कस्मैचित्प्रशंसयेत् ।
 य एतां महाभागः प्रातः पठति स भाग्यवाञ्छायते । पशून्विन्दति । वेदार्थं
 लभते ।
 त्रिकालमेतज्जप्त्वा क्रतुशतफलमवाप्नोति । यो हस्तादित्ये जपति स महामृत्युं
 तरति य एवं वेद ॥

Sūropaniṣat Sūryātharvaṣṣam Cha

Sūditasvātiriktārisūrinandātmabhāvitam.

Sūryanārāyaṇākāraṃ naumi chitsūryavaibhavam.

Om bhadraṃ karṇebhiḥ śruṇuyāma devāḥ. Bhadraṃ
paśyemākṣabhīryajatrāḥ. Sthirairāṅgaistuṣṭuvāṃsastanūbhir-
vyaśema devahitaṃ yadāyuh. Svasti na indro vṛddhaśravāḥ.
Svasti naḥ pūṣā viśvavedāḥ. Svasti nastārksyo ariṣṭanemiḥ.
Svasti no bṛhaspatirdadhātu.

Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ.

Hariḥ om atha sūryātharvāṅgirasam vyākhyāsyāmaḥ.

Brahmā ṛṣiḥ. Gāyatrī chhandāḥ. Ādityo devatā. Haṃsaḥ
so'hamagninārāyaṇayuktaṃ bijam. Hṛllekhā śaktiḥ.
Viyadādisargasam'yuktaṃ kilakam. Chaturvidhapuruṣārtha-
siddhyarthe viniyogaḥ.

Ṣaṭsvārārūḍhena bījena ṣaḍaṅgaṃ raktāmbujasam'sthitam.

Saptāśvarathinaṃ hiraṇyavarṇaṃ chaturbhujam
padmadvayābhayavaradahastaṃ kālachakrapraṇetāraṃ
śrīśūryanārāyaṇaṃ ya evaṃ veda sa vai brāhmaṇaḥ.

Om bhūrbhuvahsuvaḥ. Om tatsaviturvareṇyaṃ bhargo devasya
dhīmahi. Dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt.

Sūrya ātmā jagatastasthuṣaścha. Sūryādvai khalvimāni bhūtāni
jāyante. Sūryādyajnaḥ parjanyaon'namātmā namasta āditya.

Tvameva pratyakṣam karmakartāsi. Tvameva pratyakṣam
brahmāsi. Tvameva pratyakṣam viṣṇurasi. Tvameva
pratyakṣam rudro'si. Tvameva pratyakṣamṛgasi. Tvameva
pratyakṣam yajurasi. Tvameva pratyakṣam sāmāsi. Tvameva
pratyakṣamatharvāsi. Tvameva sarvaṃ chhando'si.

Ādityādvāyurjāyate. Ādityādbhūmirjāyate. Ādityādāpo jāyante.
Ādityājyotirjāyate.

Ādityādvyoṃa diśo jāyante. Ādityāddevā jāyante. Ādityādvedā
jāyante.

Ādityo vā eṣa etanmaṇḍalaṃ tapati. Asāvādityo brahma.

Ādityon'taḥkaraṇamanobuddhichittāhaṅkāraḥ. Ādityo vai
vyānaḥ samānodāno'pānaḥ prāṇaḥ.

Ādityo vai śrotravakchakṣūrasanaghrāṇāḥ. Ādityo vai
vākpāṇipādapāyūpasthāḥ.

Ādityo vai śabdasparśarūparasagandhāḥ. Ādityo vai
vachanādānāgamanavisargānandāḥ.

Ānandamayo jñānamayo vijnānānamaya ādityaḥ. Namo
mitrāya bhānave mṛtyormā pāhi.

Bhrājīṣṇave viśvahetave namaḥ. Sūryādbhavanti bhūtāni
sūryeṇa pālītāni tu.

Sūrye layaṃ prāpnuvanti yaḥ sūryaḥ so'hameva cha.
Chakṣurno devaḥ savitā chakṣurna uta parvataḥ.

Chakṣurdhātā dadhātu naḥ. Ādityāya vidmahe sahasrakiraṇāya
dhīmahi. Tannaḥ sūryaḥ prachodayāt.

Savitā paśchātātsavitā purastātsavitottarāttātsavitādhārāttāt.

Savitā naḥ suvatu sarvatātiṃ savitā no rāsātāṃ dīrghamāyuh.

Om ityekākṣaraṃ brahma. Gṛṇīriti dve akṣare. Sūrya
ityakṣaradvayam. Āditya iti triṇyakṣarāṇi.

Etasyaiva sūryasyāṣṭākṣaro manuḥ. Yaḥ sadāharaharjapati sa
vai brāhmaṇo bhavati sa vai brāhmaṇo bhavati.

Sūryābhimukho japtvā mahāvyaḍhibhayātpramuchyate.

Alakṣmīrnaśyati. Abhakṣyabhakṣaṇātpūto bhavati.

Agamyāgamanātpūto bhavati. Patitasambhāṣaṇātpūto bhavati.

Asatsambhāṣaṇātpūto bhavati.

Madhyāhne sūryābhimukhaḥ paṭhet. Sadyotpannapañchamahā-
pātakātpramuchyate.

Saiṣāṃ sāvitṛiṃ vidyāṃ na kiñchidapi na
kasmaichitpraśaṃsayet.

Ya etāṃ mahābhāgaḥ prātaḥ paṭhati sa bhāgyavāñjāyate.

Paśūnvindati. Vedārthaṃ labhate.

Trikālametajjaptvā kratuśataphalamavāpnoti. Yo hastāditye
japati sa mahāmṛtyuṃ tarati ya evaṃ veda.



Appendix 4

Satyanarayana Katha

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

ॐ जपाकुसुमसंकाशं काश्यपेयं महाद्युतिम् ।
ध्वान्तारिं सर्वपापघ्नं प्रणतोऽस्मि दिवाकरम् ॥

Om japākusumasamkāśaṁ kāśyapeyaṁ mahādyutim.
Dhvāntāriṁ sarvapāpaghnaṁ praṇato'smi divākaram.

Om, I bow to the maker of the day, the destroyer of
all sins, the enemy of darkness, the great light, the
son of Kashyapa, whose colour is like the japa flower.

Narada Rishi is the *Triloka Sanchari*, the one who moves about
in the three worlds. Once when he visited the earth plane,
there was great misery. He was unable to find a way to relieve
human suffering, so he approached
Sri Narayana and related to Him the
sad state of affairs on earth.



Lord Narayana said to Narada, “O
venerable Rishi, let people observe
the Satyanarayana Vrat in the even-
ing of Sankranti or Poornima. Let
them all hear the story, the *katha*,
of Satyanarayana. All miseries will
come to an end. There is no doubt
of this.”

Rishi Narada thereupon returned
to earth and preached the glory of

the Satyanarayana Vrat. Many observed the vow without taking any food during the course of the day and attained what they desired. All were happy and prosperous.

The observance of the Satyanarayana Vrat does not cost much. You need only give a small gift to the pandit who comes to read the story and then distribute some prasad which also need not be very costly. Some wheat flour and sugar will make up the prasad. A little curd and some fruit are required. Even the poorest man can observe this *vrat*, or vow.

In North India the vow is observed by the vast majority of people. It takes about three hours to complete the whole observance. It is generally observed on the full moon day, particularly the Kartik, Vaisakh, Shravan and Chaitra Poornimas and the Sankranti day. It can also be done on new moon days.

Five stories are connected with this vrat. They speak about the glory of Lord Narayana and His grace, His prasad, and of the incalculable benefit derived by observing the vrat. He who hears these stories with faith, devotion and one-pointedness of mind derives considerable benefit. The first of these is the story of Narada, narrated above. The other stories have great moral lessons in them concerning truthfulness and fulfilment of promises.

2. The story of a poor Brahmin

There was a very poor Brahmin. He was living on alms. Lord Narayana appeared before him in the form of an old Brahmin, asked him to observe the Satyanarayana Vrat and gave him His word of assurance that he would be free from poverty, by observing this vrat. The Brahmin acted accordingly. All his desires were fulfilled.





3. The story of a woodcutter

The same Brahmin then did the vrat on a grand scale. A poor woodcutter entered the compound of the Brahmin to drink some water. The katha of Satyanarayana was going on. The woodcutter, attracted only by the skill of the story teller, sat down and heard it with rapt attention. He also was inspired to observe the vrat in his house. He took some prasad and ate it.

Then he went to the market place and sold his bundle of fuel. He received double the usual amount for his fuel. He immediately purchased the things that were necessary for the vrat and observed it along with his family members, with intense faith and devotion. All his desires were fulfilled. He enjoyed everything that was possible on this earth plane. After death he attained the supreme abode of satya loka where truth alone prevails.

4. The story of a merchant

Once upon a time, King Ulkamukha reigned over the earth. He was a devotee of Lord Satyanarayana. The queen, too, was very pious. One day they observed a fast and performed the Satyanarayana Vrat on the banks of the holy Bhadrashree.

A merchant named Sadhu came to the king and asked him what he was doing. The king explained to the merchant all about the Satyanarayana Vrat. When Sadhu returned home he narrated to his wife, Lilavathi, the glory of the



Satyanarayana Vrat as he heard it from the king. Thereupon, both resolved to observe it, provided they were blessed with a child. Lilavathi soon brought forth a girl whom they named Kalavathi.

Sadhu now thought that he would postpone the vrat until after his daughter was married. The wedding of Kalavathi took place in the course of time, but Sadhu had entirely forgotten his resolve. After some time, he went to foreign countries for trade along with his son-in-law.

Lord Narayana felt it was high time He reminded Sadhu of his resolve. One night, while Sadhu was at a place called Ratnasarpur, he was suddenly arrested and imprisoned along with his party by the royal police. The police suspected them to be thieves. At the same time, thieves had robbed the property of Sadhu in his native place.

Meanwhile, poor Lilavathi and Kalavathi were leading a miserable life in the streets. One day, Kalavathi went to get alms, and it so happened that she received some prasad of Lord Satyanarayana from a temple. She came back to her mother and pleaded that they, too, should observe the vrat. They thus observed the vrat and worshipped Lord Satyanarayana.

That very day, the king of Ratnasarpur dreamt that Sadhu and his party were not really guilty of any theft and that they should be released else he would be destroyed along with his



relatives. The king at once released Sadhu and his party from prison, giving them double the value for their merchandise.

Sadhu was on his way back to his native village when Lord Satyanarayana appeared before him in the guise of a mendicant and asked him what he had in the boat. Sadhu suspected that the mendicant might ask him for some money. He therefore replied that there were only bundles of leaves in the boat.

The mendicant replied, “Your words will come true, O merchant!” That night, while Sadhu was on his usual round of checking the contents of the boat, he found that the jewels had indeed all turned into leaves! He realized that this was due to uttering falsehood to the mendicant. He quickly went out in search of the mendicant, found him in a secluded spot and begged his pardon.

The mendicant sternly said, “You have not kept up your promise of observing the Satyanarayana Vrat.” Then he revealed his true identity to the merchant, gave him words of solace and disappeared. Sadhu came back to his boat and found that all the bags contained jewels again. He worshipped Lord Satyanarayana with intense faith and devotion.

After five days, Sadhu reached his native place. He sent a message to inform his wife and daughter of his arrival. At the time when the messenger arrived to give the news, Lilavathi and Kalavathi were hearing the Satyanarayana Katha. When they had finished the worship, they went to meet Sadhu, but, alas, they had forgotten to take the prasad of the Lord.

Lord Satyanarayana wanted to point out their carelessness in not taking the prasad. The boat with its wealth and their son-in-law sank. The son-in-law struggled in desperation for his life. Sadhu who was on the shore prayed and worshipped the Lord. A divine voice was heard in the sky, “Kalavathi has not taken My prasad. So this has happened.” Kalavathi hurried back to her house and ate the prasad. She returned, and with sheer joy on her face, beheld both her father and her husband who was miraculously saved through the grace of Lord Satyanarayana. Even the boat and the jewels were recovered miraculously. All rejoiced. Sadhu narrated all that had happened during his travel and how he was saved by the Lord when in distress.

Thenceforth, the couple, Sadhu and Lilavathi, regularly observed the Satyanarayana Vrat during Poornima and Sankranti, and lived happily ever after. They attained the blissful abode of Lord Narayana.



5. The story of King Tungadhwaja

One day, King Tungadhwaja went out hunting. After walking a long distance, he was overcome by fatigue. He sat under a banyan tree. Some boys of the cowherd class were performing the vrat of Satyanarayana in the vicinity of the banyan tree. The boys came to know that a king was resting under the tree. One of them respectfully took some prasada and placed it before the king.

The king did not want to attend the function, nor prostrate before the Lord. He did not take the prasada either. In fact, he cast a look of disgust at the offering, and proudly returned to his capital.

The Lord wanted to teach the king a lesson. The king was given the news that his sons and daughters had died and his whole property had been destroyed. He inwardly understood that this was due to the disrespect he had shown to the Lord and His prasada. He repented very much for his wrong doing.

With a sore but repentant heart, he made his way to the banyan tree where the boys had worshipped the Lord. He himself now performed the worship with intense faith and devotion. Lord Satyanarayana showered His grace upon the king. He got back his lost property and his children. The king thereafter regularly worshipped the Lord and lived happily.

He who observes this vrat, which is even being observed by the gods themselves, with faith, devotion and self-surrender; he who hears the sacred story of Lord Satyanarayana with



faith and devotion; he who attends the worship and eats the prasada – he certainly attains health, wealth and joy. He is uplifted from the mire of worldliness and the clutches of death. He finally abides in the Truth.

In the Kali Yuga, worship of Lord Hari through the Satyanarayana Vrat makes one happy, peaceful and prosperous. This is the truth described in the ancient epics.

Glossary

- Abhishek** – ceremonial bath, consecration
Achamana – sipping water with recitation of mantras
Aditya – the sun, son of Aditi
Aditya grihas – the house of Aditya
Agni tattwa – the energy lying within fire
Ajna chakra – the third eye, the command or monitoring psychic and pranic centre
Anahata chakra – centre of emotions, corresponds to the cardiac plexus in the physical body
Anahata nada – unstruck sound
Apas tattwa – the water element
Aradhana – service, adoration
Arghya – offering of water to the divine
Ahimsa – being without violence
Arjavam – simplicity
Akrodha – being without anger
Arogya vrat – ritual or system for promotion of health
Astra – weapon
Aushadi – medicinal herbs
Avidya – the primordial condition of ignorance
Bhavana – feeling; condition; attitude; inclination or disposition of mind
Chakra – vortex of energy
Chaturmas – four months of monsoon season traditionally used for sadhana

Chhath – arogya vrat performed on Kartik Shukla Shashtri
Daan – gift, the act of giving in accordance with traditional precepts
Dharma – the laws or fundamental support of life; righteousness
Ghati – measurement of time equal to twenty-four minutes
Granthi – psychic knots of existence
Gunas – quality; the three gunas, qualities or aspects of prakriti (nature) sattwa, rajas and tamas
Homa – performance of rituals and correct conduct for householders
Hridayakasha – the supreme space of the psychic heart
Indriya sparsha – touching different parts of the body with water while repeating mantras
Ishta – one's personal chosen deity and form of worship
Jal prokshan – sprinkling of water on the body
Japa – remembrance, repetition of mantra
Jnana – spiritual perception, intuition and wisdom
Katha – story
Satyanarayana Katha – stories of Lord Narayana
Koshas – sheath or body; a dimension of experience and existence
Kripalutva – cultivation of compassion
Kshamatva – the ability to forgive
Lokas – seven planes of existence
Manipura chakra – centre of vitality, energy and willpower; corresponding to the solar plexus
Marjanam – purifying the organs of the body
Mooladhara chakra – basic psychic and pranic centre in the human body situated; connected to the coccygeal plexus, it is the seat of kundalini (the primal evolutionary energy in human beings)
Muhurta – auspicious time
Niyama – observances for personal discipline
Nyasa – practice of awakening the shakti in the body through mantra and gesture
Panchagni – sadhana of five fires

Panchang – calendar and astrological calculation
Parampara – tradition, lineage
Paravidya – transcendental knowledge
Pooja – worship
Poorna marjanam – complete purification
Prakriti – the manifest world
Prana – vital energy, life force
Prasad – that which brings joy and happiness
Prithwi tattwa – the earth element
Rashi – twelve constellations of the zodiac
Rita – the cosmic principles of order and stability
Sadhaka – one who practises sadhana; a spiritual aspirant
Sadhana – spiritual practice or discipline performed regularly
Sahasrara – highest psychic centre, which symbolizes the threshold between the psychic and spiritual realms and is located at the crown of the head
Samata sarvabhuteshu – goodwill towards all creatures
Samskaras – mental impression stored in the subtle body as an archetype
Sandhya – three conjunctions of time in relation to the sun: dawn, noon, dusk
Sankalpa – positive resolve; purpose, aim, intention; willpower
Sankranti – transition of the sun from one zodiac to another
Sanyam – restraint, holding the positive qualities of one's nature
Satya – truthfulness
Shaucha – purity of mind
Shuddhi – state of total purity in all dimension
Sthula sharira – the physical body
Sukshma sharira – subtle body
Surya namaskara – invocation of Surya through asana and mantra
Surya upasthaanam – the mantras to invoke and worship Surya
Swadhisthana chakra – psychic and pranic centre situated at the base of the spinal column in the lumbar region, associated with the sacral plexus, and the storehouse of subconscious impressions

Swadhyaya – self-analysis, the effort to move towards sattwa by improving oneself

Tapah – complete restraint

Tapasya – austerity, process of removing impurities

Tarpanam – the offering of water to the ancestors, planets and devas

Tejas – the subtle realm of existence

Tirtha – place of pilgrimage, sacred place

Upasana – personalized form of worship

Vandanam – adoration, salutation

Vayu tattwa – air element

Vidhi – practice

Vidya – knowledge

Vishuddhi chakra – the psychic and pranic centre located at the level of the throat pit, associated with the cervical and laryngeal plexus at the base of the throat; psychic centre particularly connected with purification and communication

Vrat – resolution to carry out a particular vow; adherence to the teachings

Yajna – vedic fire ritual and invocation

Yama – disciplines of conduct which render the mind tranquil



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SATYANANDA YOGA
BIHAR YOGA

It is the mission of Paduka Darshan Sannyasa Peeth to bring alive customs as defined in the classical scriptures of India. Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati is reviving the ancient Saurya traditions, such as the observance of Sankranti and daan, to preserve the wisdom of the sages for the upliftment of spiritual aspirants.

Saurya Traditions I is a journey into the world of Surya, the Sun, who is explored from many angles: mythology, science and astrology. The influence of the sun on the planet Earth, on *Prakriti*, nature, and the individual has fascinated humankind since time immemorial.

Worship, invocation and ritual have been devised to connect with the Sun and reap the benefits on all dimensions of human existence. For the modern age, *Saurya Traditions I* proposes a practical sadhana to make this connection a reality in day-to-day life.



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