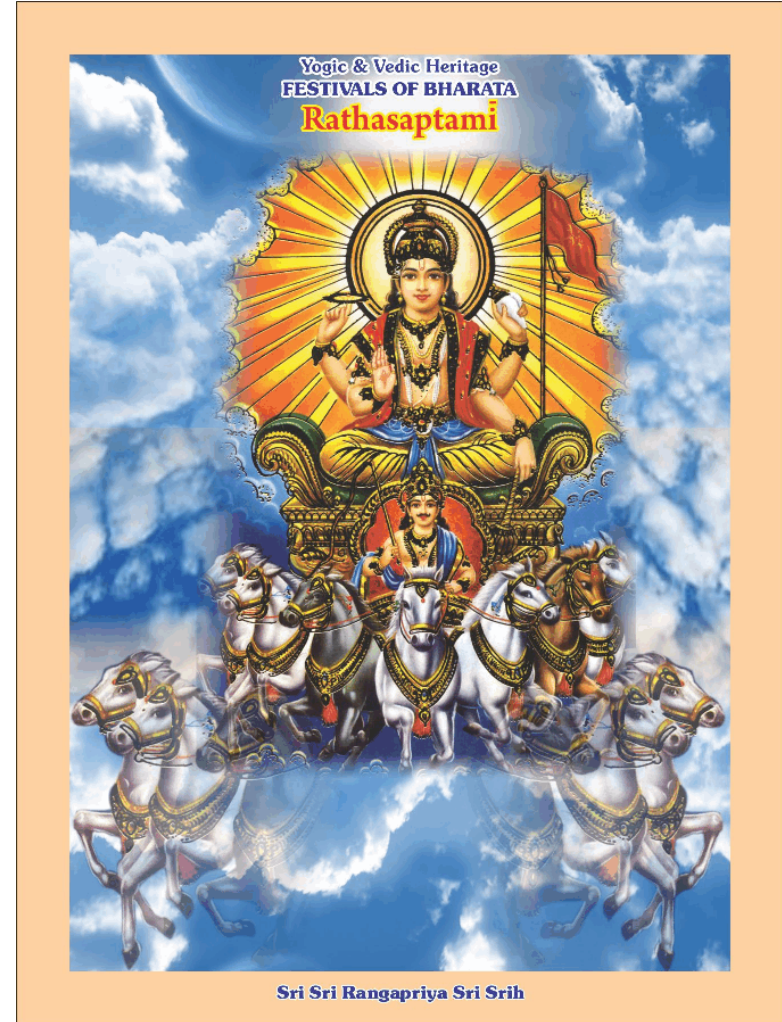




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We Dedicate this Sacred Treasure at the holy lotus feet of

Sriranga Mahaguru and SriMata

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अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ऌ	ॡ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अः
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ	ṝ	ḷ	ḹ	e	ai	o	au	am	ah
क	ख	ख	ग	ङ											
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa											
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ											
ca	cha	ja	jha	ña											
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण											
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa											
त	थ	द	ध	न											
ta	tha	da	dha	na											
प	फ	ब	भ	म											
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma											
य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ह								
ya	ra	la	va	śa	sha	sa	ha								

Example:

क	का	कि	की	कु	कू	कृ	क्लृ	के	कै	को	कौ	कं	कः
ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū	kṛ	klṛ	ke	kai	ko	kau	kam	kah



RathaSaptamī

Ratha Saptamī is one of the very important festivals observed by *Sanāthana Ārya Bhāratīyas*. It is observed on the *Saptamī* of the *śuklapaksha* of the month of *Māgha*. All the followers of *vaidika* traditions such as *Śaivas* and *Vaishṇavas* observe this festival with devotion and faith. The Sun is the adorable deity of this festival. He is an object of worship for all classes of people. In a *Bhaktidarśana* called ‘*Soura*’, the sun alone is the supreme deity. He has been considered as one among the five deities in the *pūjākalpa* also called *pañcāyatana*. Not only this. The disc of the Sun is a medium of worship for both *Hari* and *Hara*, like the *Sālagrāma* and *Śivalinga*.

ध्येयस्सदा सवितुमण्डलमध्यवर्ती नारायणस्सरसिजासनसन्निविष्टः ।

अर्कमण्डलमध्यस्थं सूर्यकोटिसमप्रभम् ।

ब्रह्मादिसेव्यपादाब्जं नौमि ब्रह्म रमासखम् ॥

Nārāyaṇa is meditated upon in the middle of the *Sūryamaṇḍala*. The name *Sūryanārāyaṇa* also is famous. The *śloka* ‘गायत्र्यर्काग्निगोचरः शम्भुः’ states that *Śiva* is the *dhyānamūrti* in the *Sūryamaṇḍala*.

The *Upanishads* such as

य एषोऽन्तरादित्ये हिरण्मयः पुरुषः

स यश्चायं पुरुषे यश्चासावादित्ये ।

proclaim that *Paramātma* should be worshipped in the *Ādityamaṇḍala*. The *Gāyatrīmantra Japa* which is done in the *Sandhyāvandana* performed three times a day, has the sun (*Savitṛ*) as its deity. Therefore it is natural that this festival is observed by all devotees as it is a festival of the Sun God who is both the *Upāsya devata* and *Upāsana dvāradevata* and a dear deity for all.

The names of this *parva*:

This is well-known as ‘*RathaSaptamī*’ and ‘*Acalā Saptamī*’ in the *śāstras*.

सूर्यग्रहणतुल्या तु शुक्ला माघस्य सप्तमी ।

अचला सप्तमी दुर्गा शिवरात्रिर्महाभरः ॥

The name of the festival is ‘*RathaSaptamī*’ because the Sun God who is known as ‘*Rathavara*’ is being worshipped on this *Saptamī* which is a distinct day.

“एवंविधं रथवरं रथवाजियुक्तम्” is one explanation. (*Dharma dīpikā—Dharmasindhuvyākhyā*)

"But in the next verse of that *śloka* viz “हैमं च हैम शतदीधीतिना समेतम्” the Sun is referred to separately. Therefore the word ‘*Rathavara*’ here applies to the chariot of the Sun and not to the Sun. Therefore it is more appropriate to interpret the term ‘*RathaSaptamī*’ as the *Saptamītithi* for the worship of God, on account of the northward journey of the famous chariot of the Sun. **It is most proper to call this as ‘*RathaSaptamī*’, as it is the *Saptamī tithi* from which day the *Rathotsavas* begin in the temples during *uttarāyaṇa*. This explanation conforms to the exposition of the message of *RathaSaptamī* provided by *Śrīraṅgagurudeva*.**

"The reason why this festival is called ‘*Acalā Saptamī*’ is, just as *Akshaya Tṛtīyā* gives endless benefits, this sacred *Saptamī* also gives permanent benefits" This is one explanation. Some people have explained that, as it is the *Saptamītithi* on which one has to take a bath very early in the morning in the holy water that will be still (in rivers and ponds), and happens to be undisturbed by any one, it is called ‘*Acalā Saptamī*’. of these two, the first explanation is more appropriate.

The day and time of the observation

The precept is that this *parva* should be

observed on the *Saptamītithi* of the *śuklapaksha* of the month of *Māgha*. Some matters special to this, need to be discussed. What should then be the extent of *Saptamītithi* on that day? The answer is, it should be prevailing in the early morning. Bath should be taken at that time only.

अरुणोदयवेलायां तस्यां स्नानं महाफलम् (विष्णुस्मृति)

If *Saptamītithi* prevails in the early morning, when should this *vrata* be observed? Some say that the previous day on which the *acalāSaptamī* is conjoined with the *tithi* of the previous day, is best for the observance.

अचला सप्तमी दुर्गा शिवरात्रिर्महाभरः ।

द्वादशी वत्स पूजायां सुखदा प्राग्युता सदा॥

If *Saptamī tithi* happens to end even before *arunodaya* because of *tithikshaya* on the following day, the above should be followed. There the *kshaya* of *Saptamītithi* should be made to enter into *shashṭhitithi*, and then the a bath should be taken at *arunodaya*.

As *RathaSaptamī* is considered included among the *Manvādi*, those who are supposed to perform *śrāddha* should do it in the manner appropriate to ‘*manvādi*’. Should the *śrāddha* be performed at noon, like the *śrāddha* of *amāvāsyā*, or in the forenoon? The answer is, as

this *śrāddha* comes in the *śuklapaksha*, the *śrāddha* and the *tarpaṇa* of this *parva* should be performed in the forenoon only. In case the *Māghamāsa* happens to be a *malamāsa*, should it be performed in that intercalary month or in the regular month? The answer is, it should be performed in both the months.

मन्वादिं पौतकं च कुर्यान्मासद्वयेऽपि च । (स्मृतिचन्द्रिका)

Is *Rathasaptamī vrata* is a *nitya karma* or a *kamya karma*? It is both. As the treatise *Vishṇu smṛti* mentions both the words *Nitya* and *Avaśya*, it becomes *nitya vrata* if performed without desires. (मकरस्थे रवौ यो हि न स्नात्यभ्युदिते रवौ त्रिस्थलीसेतु)

It becomes a *Kāmyavrata* if it is observed with a desire for health, wealth etc.

Significance of the observance of *Rathasaptamī*

If this *vrata* is performed on the day of *Ratha Saptamī* after bath and other rituals in the right time, inexhaustible benefits will be obtained. The entire month of *Māgha* is auspicious for the early morning bath. But it should be done with faith and devotion. And it should be observed with understanding of the inner meaning of the *karma*. Only then will it become powerful.

‘यदेव विद्यया करोति तदेव वीर्यवत्तरं भवति’ No spiritual benefits are obtained by what is called ‘*Balavanta*

Māghasnāna’. One who takes bath very early in the morning in the month of *Māgha*, will elevate seven generations of the family of his parents to better births in future so that spiritual advancement may be made). “उद्धृत्य सप्त पुरुषान् पितृमातृवंश्यान् स्वर्गं प्रयात्यमरदेहधरो नरोऽसौ”

The *śāstras* if one cannot afford to take bath (in *Ushāhkāla*) on all the days of *Māghamāsa*, he should bathe early in the morning atleast on the days of *San̄krānti*, *Rathasaptamī* and *māghī* in that month.

अस्मिन् योगे त्वशक्तोऽपि स्नायादपि दिनत्रयम् (पाद्य)

The *śāstras* proclaim:—“The *Saptamī* of the month of *Māgha* is equal to the solar eclipse (in bestowing benefits). Great benefits are obtained by taking bath in the early morning on that day. If one were to take a holy bath in *Tīrtharāja Prayāga* on that day, it will be equivalent to the benefits obtained by the observances performed on the days of one crore solar eclipses. Sins committed in seven births will get redeemed. All the sins committed knowingly or unknowingly by the *Trikaṇas* will vanish. The grief of blemishful misfortunes gets destroyed. And the person becomes spotless in a moment” etc.

“तस्यां स्नानं महाफलम्

“प्रयागे यदि लभ्येत कोटिसूर्यग्रहैस्समा

“सूर्यग्रहणतुल्या तु शुक्ला माघस्य सप्तमी”
 “कुर्यात् स्नानार्घ्यादानाभ्यां आयुरारोग्यसम्पदः”
 “तन्मे रोगं च शोकं च माकरी हन्तु सप्तमी”
 एतज्जन्मकृतं पापं यच्च जन्मान्तरार्जितम्
 मनोवाक्कायजं यच्च ज्ञाताज्ञाते च ये पुनः
 केशवादित्यमालोक्य क्षणान्निष्कल्मषो भवेत्”

The one who gifts a golden idol of *Sūryadeva*, placed in a chariot with horses on that day, will obtain the emperorship of the whole world.

‘एवं विधं रथवरं रथवाजियुक्तं हैमं च हेमशतदीधितिना समेतम् । दद्याच्च माघसितसप्तमिवासरे यः सोऽसङ्गचक्रगतिरेव महीं भुनक्ति ॥

Modalities of observance

The custom of taking a holy bath early in the morning on the day of *Rathasaptamī* in *Puṇyatīrthas*, and doing *mantrajapa* and performing worship of God is there in all the traditions. It is very auspicious to have an *Avagāhanasnāna* either in a sea or in lakes such as *Pushakara*, or in great rivers like *Gaṅgā* etc. The deity to be worshipped on that day is the Sun-God or *Nārāyaṇa* or *Śiva* who stay in the middle of the disk of the sun. All the precepts of the *parva* are related to Sun-God only. The special *vidhis* related to the observance of the festival may be summed up as follows:-

The *Bhavishyapurāṇa* states that one should take a holy bath on the previous day i.e. on the

shashthitithi, and follow the rule of taking food only once on that day, and observe the *vrata* of *Rathasaptamī*. “स्नात्वा षष्ठ्यामेकभुक्तं सप्तम्यां निश्चलं जलम्”

A devotee should immerse himself in the water (of a lake etc) before it is touched by ordinary people who have no interest in taking a holy bath. It is better to stir the water with a sugarcane staff, than doing so with bare hands. He should light a lamp with gingelly oil and wicks and place that lighted lamp in a container made of gold or silver, or dried bottle gourd, and keep seven leaves of *Arka* and Seven leaves of *jujube* tree on the head and shoulders, and meditating upon the Sun-God in the heart with an attentive mind, he should pray to *Varuṇadeva* who is another form of Sun-God.

न केन चाल्यते यावत् तावत्स्नानं समाचरेत् ।

“इक्षुदण्डेन जलं चालयित्वा सप्तार्कपत्राणि बदरीपत्राणि च शिरसि निधाय पूर्वोक्तैः मन्त्रैः स्नात्वा”

सौवर्णे राजते पात्रे भक्त्यालाबुमयेऽथवा
 तैलेन वर्तिर्दातव्या महारजनरञ्जिता
 समाहितमना भूत्वा धृत्वा शिरसि दीपकम् ।
 भास्करं हृदये ध्यात्वा इमं मन्त्रमुदीरयेत् ॥

And *Varuṇadeva* should be prayed with the following *mantra*:

नमस्ते रुद्ररूपाय रसानां पतये नमः ।
 वरुणाय नमस्तेऽस्तु हरिवास नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

After praying thus, and meditating upon God, *tarpaṇa* should be offered to God in water, and lighted lamps should be let afloat in water.

Then a holy bath should be taken, chanting the *mantras* which carry the following purport:-

"Let the presiding deity of this *saptamītithi* of the *makara māsa* destroy all the sins committed by me in my (previous) seven lives, and the diseases and the grief of seven (previous) lives. Let this *saptamī* which is dear to *Saptāśva* (*Sūrya*) *deva* rout the sins committed by me in this life, the sins committed by me in other births, sins committed by my mind, speech and the body, and the sins committed by me knowingly or unknowingly." Then the *darśana* of *Sūryanārāyaṇa* should be had.

यद्यज्जन्मकृतं पापं मया सप्तसु जन्मसु ।
तन्मे रोगं च शोकं च माकरी हन्तु सप्तमी ।
यद्यज्जन्मकृतं पापं यच्च जन्मान्तरार्जितम् ।
मनोवाक्कायजं यच्च ज्ञाताज्ञाते च ये पुनः ।
इति सप्तविधं पापं स्नानान्मे सप्तसप्तिके ।
सप्तव्याधिसमायुक्तं हर माकरि सप्तमि''
एतन्मन्त्रत्रयं जप्त्वा स्नात्वा पादोदके नरः ।
केशवादित्यमालोक्य क्षणान्निष्कल्मषो भवेत् ।

Arghya should be offered to *Sūryanārāyaṇa* by *Ashtāṅgavidhi* using *Arka* leaves, leaves of

jujube tree, *dūrva*, *akshatā* and sandal paste. The *Rathasaptamī* festival should also be praised.

Arghya should be offered to the Sun-God with these words - "O God with (the chariot drawn by) seven horses! O Lord! the light for the seven worlds! O *Divākara*! Please accept this *Arghya* along with *saptamī*! Then, after *Arghya* is offered to *Sūrya*, the goddess of *RathaSaptamī* should be prayed as follows:-

"O Mother of all the worlds, O beloved of *Saptāśva* (Sun-God) O! *saptamī* endowed with seven *vyāhṛtis*, O! *Sūryamanḍala rūpini*! Salutations to you!

सप्तसप्तिवहप्रीत सप्तलोकप्रदीपन ।
सप्तमीसहितो देव गृहाणार्घ्यं दिवाकर ॥
जननी सर्वलोकानां सप्तमी सप्तसप्तिके।
सप्तव्याहृतिके देवि नमस्ते सूर्यमण्डले''

Some people observe this, conforming to the below said precept:—

"The number of horses of *Sūryadeva* is seven. The number of worlds is seven; the number of islands on the earth is seven. And, taking seven leaves of *Arka*, holy bath should be taken on this (seventh) *saptamītithi*".

सप्ताश्वसप्तलोकाश्च सप्तद्वीपा वसुन्धरा ।
सप्तार्कपर्णान्यादाय सप्तम्यां स्नानमाचरेत्''

Then the figure of a lotus with eight petals with

the *karnika* should be drawn with red *candana*. Beginning with the petal on the eastern side and proceeding clockwise, figures of the Sun God with his names viz. *Ravi*, *Bhānu*, *Vivasvanta*, *Bhāskara*, *Savitṛ*, *Arka*, *Sahasrakiraṇa* and *Sarvātmaka* should to be drawn on the petals and in the centre, pictures of Lord *Śiva* along with *Pārvatī* associated with *Pranava* should be drawn and they should be invoked and worshipped.

The golden idol of *Sūrya* should be worshipped with the *naivedya* of *ereyappa* made of sesame flour. Sesame flour with ghee and jaggery should be placed in a copper vessel, or in an earthen vessel, if one cannot afford it. An ear ornament made of gold, or if one cannot afford it, the one made of sesame flour should be placed in that. The vessel should be covered with a red coloured cloth and should be worshipped with incense and flowers.

चन्दनेन लिखेत्पद्मं अष्टपत्रं सकर्णिकम् ।

मध्ये शिवं सपत्नीकं प्रणवेन च संयुतम् ।

पूर्वादिदलेषु रवि भानु विवस्वद्भास्करसवित्रकं,

सहस्रकिरणसर्वात्मकान् सम्पूज्य”

“तिलपिष्टमयापूपैः हैमं सूर्यं सम्पूज्य विप्राय दद्यात्

ताम्रपात्रे यथाशक्ति मृन्मये वाथ भक्तिमान् ।

स्थापयेत्तिलपिष्टं च सघृतं सगुडं तथा ॥

काञ्चनं तालकं कृत्वा अशक्तस्तिलपिष्टजम् ।

सज्जगद्य रक्तवस्त्रेण पुष्पैर्धूपैरथार्चयेत् ॥

After worshipping in this way, the golden idol of Sun-God, the ear ornament and balls made of sesame flour mixed with ghee and jaggery, should be gifted to worthy recipients.

The ear ornament should be gifted reflecting upon the following *śloka*:— "I am gifting this ear ornament to avoid misfortunes and miseries, by the grace of *Āditya* and by the benefits of the morning.

आदित्यस्य प्रसादेन प्रातःस्नानफलेन च ।

दुष्टदौर्भाग्यदुःखघ्नं मया दत्तं तु तालकम्”

If one cannot afford to worship *Sūryanārāyaṇa* in a golden idol, his (reflected image) in water may be worshipped. He may be worshipped in both ways too. It is auspicious to do *japa*, *pārāyaṇa* of *Sāvitrāshṭāksharamahāmantra*, *SūryaGāyatri*, *Aruṇamantra* of *Yajurveda*, *Mahāsaṭuramantra* of *R̥gveda*, *Saurasāma* and *Ādityahṛdaya* and others, which are dear to *Sūrya*. After this worship is completed, it is also excellent to have the *darśan* of the *Sūryamanḍalotsava* of the idol of God which has been brought in a procession from a temple, or even of the *Rathotsava*. We come across the custom of distributing sesame seeds mixed with condiments on the day of *Ratha*

Saptamī also as in *San̄krānti*, for obtaining peace.

Tradition and dos and don'ts. (in the format of questions and answers)

Question 1: - The first question arises regarding *Sūryadeva* himself, who happens to be the deity to be worshipped on that day. Why should *Sūrya* be worshipped? As the scientists know, it is just a physical object; it is a huge great globe containing very large amounts of helium gas and keeps burning by that. What is the benefit one gets by worshipping it?

Answer: - "The benefits we get from the Sun are beyond description. There can be no light for any (living being), without the Sun and no life force and no food. Even plants and trees plants prepare their food with the help of sunlight, isn't it? Sunlight is necessary even for the life of a creature like an owl which hates sunlight. The sun is the ordainer of time and deeds. All these viz. our birth, life (sustenance) and death are dependent on the Sun. It is impossible to imagine life without the Sun—'No Sun, no life'.

Moreover the sun is a very wonderful phenomenon. There is no other matter that is equal to or greater than him. He is a matchless matter that appears new every day without causing any

boredom, even though he is born every day. “नवो नवो भवति जायमानः” Though very very ancient, he is a treasure of beauty, which is ever new. At the same time, he is a terrible treasure of lustre. What a fierce beauty is the Sun! This is how he has captivated the poets. Our ancestors started worshipping this matter as God which is the support of life and a source of wonder. This is due to the emotional feelings. Especially the *Bhāratīyas*, the Aztec and Inca races who lived in the South American' countries of Mexico and Peru started the worship of the Sun and continued it for these reasons. Some even say that a group of Indians which migrated to South America and settled there, developed this tradition of worshipping of the Sun.

"Indians are pioneers in attributing divinity to the things of wonder present in nature and worshipping them. For example, their custom of serpent worship. The serpent is helpful to us as it devours insects, worms and very small animals which cause nuisance to people. Also the snake is an object of fear. One may get killed by its bite! Even then, how beautiful is this creature *Nāgappa*! Even though it is a creature belonging to the species of worms, how capable it is! It can crawl on the ground, swim in water and can jump in the air. Did not the (the feelings like) gratitude, fear and wonder regarding this (creature) become a reason for

worshipping it in our country? So also is the matter with the Sun". -This is the answer provided by some. But the sun need not be worshipped just for this reason. Because, even if we do not worship the Sun, benefits keep on coming to us from him. If he is just a wonderful (object) let us feel happy singing poems on him. But the question as to why he should be worshipped still remains. The answer to this has to be graced by *Sūryanārāyaṇa* himself who is the form of the truth that can be understood by experience, and the *Sūrya* of our intellect who is HIS incarnation in our body.

The *Sanātana Ārya Bhārata Maharshis* brought into practice the worship of *Sūrya* visualizing that, in reality, the sun is the greatest symbol, a representative and a ressembler of the *paramātma Sūrya*, and a supreme medium for the worship of that *paramātmaSūrya* the supreme effulgent light. *Paramātma* is indeed matchless. There is nothing (in the universe) which can be compared to him. Even then, nothing else (or none else) has the eligibility to be an image, a representative, a sign and a symbol of HIM than that of the Sun, who resembles HIM most. Like God himself, he is a treasure of great lustre, a great dispeller of darkness and the greatest among the greatest. “महतो महीयान्”. He is all pervading. He provides life force. He causes creation, sustenance

and destruction. Though he is at a very great distance, he makes us blossom by his rays. He is Lord of a great multitude (of astral bodies). Like God who is perceptible in the inner sky of divine knowledge, he shines in the external sky effulgently. He shows equality to all. He is self luminous and makes others shine with his splendour. All other lights get merged in his effulgence. Though in reality he does not rise or set (or travel), he appears to people to be doing so. Being the controller, cause, destroyer and purifier etc of all, his resemblance to God is matchless.

Sāligrāma, Śivaliṅga, Śrīcakra, Yantras and idols may be the media for the worship of *paramātma*. But *Sūrya* is superior to all of them. It is because he is a sacred medium that is not manmade. It is an inexhaustible medium. An invaluable form that cannot be stolen by thieves. His effulgence, the spherical shape, and the *purusha* his soul- all these are all venerable to us. But the supreme deity who is hidden in the Sun is the aim of our meditation. The *upanishadic* statements such as —

"Worship the *Hiraṇmaya Purusha* who is the soul of *Āditya*" “य एषोऽन्तरादित्ये हिरण्यः पुरुषः”, "The *Paramapurusha* who dwells in our inner space, is also present in the Sun. They are one and the same. “स यश्चायं पुरुषे, यश्चासावादित्ये, स एकः” "Oh *Pūshan!*

Ekarshi! Yama! Sūrya!, Prājāpatya! please withdraw your rays. Let me have the *darśan* of the most auspicious form of yours." “पूषनेकर्षे यम सूर्य प्राजापत्य, व्यूहरश्मीन् समूह । यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि ” etc., proclaim the *upāsana* of the *parañjyoti* which stays in the image of *Āditya*. The object of worship in all these is not the globe of burning helium. If one penetrates into it by *dhyānayoga* and notices the *tattva* which is the *paramātmāparañjyoti* in the inner *sanctum sanctorum*, then the arguments that emerge from superficial knowledge such as "Worship of the Sun is the worship of the physical Sun, Worship of wonders of nature" etc. shatter, and the light of the heart of the great sages will be revealed to us.

Question 2: - *Jnānis* say that God is one without a second. If *Sūrya* is the representative of *paramātmā*, the *śāstras* should have stated that there is only one *Āditya*. Why then the *śāstras* mention that there are twelve Suns such as *Vivasvān*, *Bhaga*, *Aryamā*, etc? Are there twelve *paramāthmas*?

Answer: - In reality twelve *Ādityas* are not there. The same *Āditya* is called by different names in each of the twelve months. Similarly there are twelve names such as, *Keśava*, *Nārāyaṇa* etc. for the same *paramātmā Sūrya*. He is worshipped as a *dvādasamūrti* in twelve places such as *lalāta*,

heart and others with the sacred names such as *Keśava* etc.

Question 3: - *Purāṇas* state that there are twelve *Ādityas*. But in *Taittirīyāranyaka* it is declared that there are eight Suns. How can these contradictory statements be taken authoritative?

Answer: - Śrīgurudeva has taught us the inner meaning of this matter. Both the statements are correct. The first statement advocates that the sun is one as the Lord of the twelve months, which we have described before. The second statement indicates the *paramātmā Sūrya* who is steady, who is self effulgent, and a witness to all; and the seven *prāṇaSūryas* who obtain the effulgence from him and who travel at his command. The *Vedas* also tell this clearly.

Regarding this, the *Ācāryas* say "There are seven *Sūryas*. They are *Aroga*, *Bhrāja*, *Paṭara*, *Pataṅga*, *Vikshara*, *Jyotishīmān* and *Vibhāsa*. The *Praṇas*, the *Jīvas*, the *Indriyajīvas* and the *saptaprāṇas* dwelling in the seven holes in the head are the seven suns. These seven suns obtain light from the eighth sun called *Kaśyapa*.

This *Kaśyapa Sūrya* does not leave the *Mahāmeru*. The name '*Kaśyapa*' is the other form of '*Paśyaka*'. It means "The *Paramātmā* who

witnesses all". That *Kaśyapa (Paśyaka)* Sun is a witness to all. This luminous wonderful crafted universe belongs to that *KaśyapaSūrya* only. All the seven *Sūryas* are placed in him. Those who cannot go to *Mahāmeru* which at the center of the universe, cannot see the *Kaśyapa Sūrya*."

“आरोगो भ्राजः पटरः पतङ्गः, विक्षरो ज्योतिषीमान् विभासः”

“प्राणो जीवानीन्द्रियजीवानि, सूर्या इत्याचार्याः, कश्यपोऽष्टमः स महामेरुं न जहाति, न हि शेकुरिव महामेरुं गन्तुम्। कश्यपः पश्यको भवति, यत्सर्वं परिपश्यतीति सौक्ष्म्यात्” “ते अस्मै सर्वे कश्यपात् ज्योतिर्लभन्ते”

यत्ते शिल्पं कश्यप रोचनावत्, इन्द्रियावत्पुष्कलं चित्रभानु । यस्मिन् सूर्यार्पितास्सप्त साकं, तस्मिन्नाजानमधिविश्रयेममिति” ॥

Question 4: - It is alright that *Paramātma*, who is in the *Sūryamandala* shall be an object of worship and meditation. But why should the *Sūryamandala* be worshipped?

Answer: - *Sūryamandala* is the form of ‘*Trayī*’ (*veda*) *vidyārūpa*. “सैषा त्रय्येव विद्या तपति” The *paratattva* which is expounded by the *trayī* and hidden in it is none other than Lord *Sūryanārāyaṇa*.

“ध्येयस्सदा सवितृमण्डलमध्यवर्ती नारायणः।”

As *Sūryamandala* happens to be the medium of worship of Lord *Sūryanārāyaṇa*, it is indeed adorable to us. The *parañjyoti* which is the essence of the *Vedas* and which dwells in that orb, is the main aim there. Isn't it that the

mass of the shell and the fibrous covering which carries the sweet coconut water (*Eḷanīru*) is also duly called *Eḷanīru* only, by those who want to relish it? In the same way, the orb, which is a divine *mandir* for the meditation of *paramātma*, whom it bears, as HE dwells in its orb, is also venerable

“यन्मण्डलं ज्ञानघनं त्वगम्यं”

Question 5: - What is the number of the horses of the chariot of the Sun?

Answer: The number of horses is seven and it is famous in *Itihāsa* and *purāṇas*. And so calling him “सप्ताश्वः सप्तसप्ति” is in vogue.

Question 6: - In reality, the Sun does not travel at all. Now, even primary school students know that due to the rotation of the earth the sun appears to rotate. This being the case, there is no point in imagining a chariot for his travel and horses for it. It can be termed only as a physical metaphor. Then which are the horses of the Sun indicated by that metaphor? What is their number? This is the purport of our question. Could it be that the seven colours that appear when Sunrays are split, are the seven horses?

Answer: - The horses that the *śāstras* state are not physical concepts. It has been already explained that the Sun is a symbol and

representative of *Paramātmā*. His seven horses also are *tattvas* related to *paratattva*.

Supplementary Question: - Then what are those seven *tattvas*?

Answer: - The seven *prāṇas* that are under the control of *ātman* are the seven horses of *paramātmā Sūrya*. They do travel but there is no motion for the *paramātmā Sūrya* by name *Kaśyapa*, who is their Lord. He is established in the *mahāmeru*. The *Prāṇasaktis* that help him are sometimes called *SaptaSūryas*, and at other times as *Saptāśvas* by the *śāstras*.

Question: As *tatvaśāstra* puts it, '*Prāṇa*' is only one force. That itself is called *Jyeshṭhaprāṇa* or *Mukhyaprāṇa*, isn't it?

Answer: - It is true that *Jyeshṭha* or *Śreshṭha Prāṇa* is one and only one. But spiritual science states that their modes or course of actions are divided into two, five, seven or ten, and they are called *pañcaprāṇa*, *sapta prāṇa* and *daśaprāṇa*. This way it may be said that *prāṇa* is only one, or as seven as per the divisions of its modes. This *tattva* itself is stated in the *vedas* as—"The chariot of the Sun is drawn by only one horse and it has seven names. "एको अश्वो वहति सप्तनामा"

Question 6: - By the above explanation one may define the Sun as a *Devatā*. But how does the *parva* '*Rathasaptamī*' becomes a *devatā*?

Answer: - *Rathasaptamī parva* is a limb of time. The presiding deity of that component of time is called '*Rathasaptamī Devatā*'. This *Rathasaptamī* is the mother of the three worlds. *Arghya* should be offered to *Sūryanārāyaṇa* accompanied by her.

“जननी सर्वलोकानां सप्तमी रथसप्तमी” “सप्तमीसहितो देव गृहाणार्घ्यं नमो स्तु ते”

This scriptural prayer has been noted earlier.

Question 7: - Why should the leaves of *arka* be used in the holy bath as part of the *vrata*?

Answer: - It should be noted that *arka* is a plant dear to *Sūrya*. Words such as '*Ekka*', '*Erkam*', '*Ākh*' are only aberrations of the word *Arka* which denote the Sun.

Question 8: - *Arka* (*Sūrya*) and *arka patra* may sound similar. But what is the relationship between the Sun-God and the leaf of that *arka*?

Āyurveda says that the leaf of *arka* is bitter, heat producing, cures *vata*, *śopha*, wounds, leprosy, and an antiseptic, and removes the disorders of phlegm and the stomach. But why should Sun god be correlated with the above said *arka* leaf which possesses many curative properties?

Answer -: We are not correlating. We should only understand the relation that is a natural

connection. The touch of *arkapatra* helps to dry up the *Rasa* which impedes *Brahmacarya*, and facilitates the blossoming of the inner spiritual centers in the body, by the Sun God. Therefore it is said to be dear to *Sūryanārāyaṇa*. Because *arkapatra* is sacred like this, *sāmagas* invoke *Ṛshis* on the *arka patra* during *upākarma*.

Question 9: - Why should jujube leaves be used during the holy bath as part of the *vrata*?

Answer: - According to *Āyurveda*, the leaf of jujube also has properties such as eradicating of skin diseases, thirst associated with fever, etc It possesses qualities by which the *ādhyatmika* and *ādhyatmika* torments are warded off.

Question 10: - Why should the *arkapatra* and *badaripatra* be used on that day in sevens only?

Answer: We have already mentioned that the number seven is a mystic number related to the Sun. The *tithi* is seventh, (*saptamī*), the number of leaves offered is seven, the number of circumambulations is seven, the number of *naivedyas* is seven and the number of horses of the Sun is also seven.

Question 11: - Why should the *Rathotsavas* be begun on that day?

Answer: - This question has been partially answered already in the write-up on

Uttarāyaṇapūṇyakāla. Generally all of us are travelling in either *Dakṣiṇāyana* or *Pitṛyāna*, ie in the path of worldly life. It is auspicious to travel in the *uttarāyaṇa* or *Nivṛttimārga* (*devayāna*) As the distinct time which facilitates it becomes available during the entire *uttarāyaṇa*, and to a greater extent during the (*uttarāyaṇa pūṇya kāla*) and the *Rathasaptamī parva*, which falls in the beginning of *uttarāyaṇa*, we are supposed to draw the *uttarāyaṇa* (*Brahmamārga*) chariot. The *parva kāla* of *Rathasaptamī* being the bright fortnight and the day (time) are related to the *Devayāna* path. Everyone draws the chariots of their own ambitions. But fortunate persons should (draw) the chariot of the wish of God with their self happiness and cooperation. For this reason, the festival of chariots of temples usually begin on the day of *Rathasaptamī*. It is not a *Rathotsava* of the life of a worldly person. It is the *Rathotsava* of the wish of *paramātma* which is the spirit of spirits (“नित्यो नित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानां”) The fortunate ones who participate in that will find the supreme shore of *Brahmamārga*. “सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम्” But the pulling of that chariot should not be just a mechanical or a technical or a technological act. It should be an act filled with *tattva*, *Bhāva* and *Bhakti* and should be an act which provides *Samskāra*.

Question 12: - What is purpose of distributing sesame on that day?

Answer: - This has been already explained in the discussion of *MakaraSankrānti parva*. Here we briefly state that sesame is a material which wards off troubles and causes peace and prosperity.

Question 13: - Why should the water, which is used for the holy bath on *Rathasaptamī*, be stirred with the staff of a sugar cane? Why is it laid down that holy water should be stirred before it is touched by others.

Answer: - This holy water is a representative of the form of *Rasa* of the *paramātman* who is cool like ambrosia. The scriptural statement “एष ब्रह्म, प्रविष्टोऽस्मि ग्रीष्मे शीतमिव हृदम्” (“I shall immerse myself in *paramātman*, just as I take a dip in a cool lake” during summer) is based on this truth. It is the most ancient thing which is only one and without a second (*Ekamevādvitīya*), and the one which is not subject to any *vikāra* “सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीत्”, as proclaimed by the *Vedas*. “That should be stirred first with the sugarcane staff in the form of our mind” is the *samskāra* that is intended in that act of stirring with the sugarcane staff.

Śrī gurudeva had enlightened us the principle behind this as follows:

"The sugar cane staff endowed with nodes represents the *parvas* of life. It represents our spinal column which has many vertebrae". A yogi immerses himself in every *parva* of the staff of life, and in every place of the *tattva* in the spinal column. Meaningful emulation of that is done by others together with *Yogi*.

Question 14: - What is the purpose of placing a vessel with a lighted lamp on the head at the time of *pūnyasnāna* of *Rathasaptamī* and offering it in the holy waters where the bath is taken?

Answer: - A lighted lamp is a representative of *paramātman* the *Parañjyoti*. It is an auspicious *dravya*. It is also a very great *dravya* for worship. It is highly appropriate to light the lamp and place it in the *sahasrārasthāna* of the head, for the worship of *Sūryanārāyaṇa* who is another representative of *paramātman*, the *Parañjyoti*, a mass of effulgence, a form of auspiciousness and the one who is very highly adorable. The head is the original place of the tree of body. It is the place of confluence of all forces. It is the place of *Nārāyaṇa* and the place of *SadāŚiva*. There is no doubt that it is very greatly proper to place that superior worship material (lighted lamp) on that best part of the body (ie the head) which is also the best place for worship.

Subordinate question: Why should the lamp which is related to *Sūryadeva* be offered in water?

Answer: - One has to immerse himself in *Brahma* in the form of holy water. The image of *Sūryadeva* has also appeared in it. It is proper the lighted lamp with which *Sūryadeva* was worshipped, is let afloat in water, as it is the form of *Rasa* of *Varuṇadevatā*, who is an other form of *Sūrya*.

Question 16: - Why should the wick used in the worship of *Sūrya* be smeared with safflower juice?

The color of *Kusumbha* (or *Mahārajana*) juice is dear to the deity *Sūrya*. *Sūryadeva* shines bright like the red hibiscus. “जपाकुसुमसङ्काशं काश्यपेयं महाद्युतिम्”. Among *Candanas*, the red *candana* is dear to him. It should be noted that the color of the cloth covering the materials for his worship viz. sesame, flour mixed with jaggery, golden idol, the ear ornament and others should also be red.

Question 17: - Why the *Sūryamandalotsava* is carried out in a special way on *Ratha Saptamī*?

Answer: - As the Sun is the presiding deity for the festival on that day, it is also the day of festival of worship of Sun-God. As the Lord who is worshipped by *yogis* is inside the orb of the Sun, it is

very greatly auspicious to have the *darśan* of the *utsava* of the idol of God who adorns the centre of the circle of effulgence of the sun, immediately after the morning bath and at the time of sunrise.

ध्येयस्सदा सवितृमण्डलमध्यवर्ती,
नारायणस्सरसिजासनसन्निविष्टः ।
अर्कमण्डलमध्यस्थं सूर्यकोटिसमप्रभम् ।
ब्रह्मादिसेव्यपादाब्जम् नौमि ब्रह्म रमासखम् ॥

The (Sun) is the form of *paramātma*, is the dwelling place of *paramātma* and is the *Mahādvāra* of *yoga*. *Yogis* travel to the city of *parabrahma* penetrating the orb of the Sun.

द्वामिमौ पुरुषौ लोके सूर्यमण्डलभेदिनौ ।
परिव्राड् योगयुक्तश्च रणे चाभिमुखो हतः ॥

In this way, the festival is specially celebrated by placing the idol of God in the middle of the orb of the idol of *Sūrya*, which is related to the nature and character of *ParamātmaSūrya* in various ways.

It should be noted that during *Sūryapūja* also which is performed at the time of taking bath, and also while worshipping the *Amśas* of *Sūryadeva*, *Śiva* accompanied by *Devi* is worshipped, which is evident from the words

“गायत्र्यर्काग्निगोचरः शम्भुः” (*Shambhu* is visualized in *Gāyatri*, *Sūrya* and *Agni*)

