

Surya

For other uses, see [Surya \(disambiguation\)](#).

“Bhanu” redirects here. For the village development committee in Nepal, see [Bhanu, Nepal](#). For Indian actress, see [Muktha \(actress\)](#).

Surya (/ˈsʊərjə/; Sanskrit: सूर्य *Sūrya*, “the Supreme Light”^[2]) also known as *Aditya*, *Surya*, *Bhanu*, *Ravi* or *Phra Athit* is the chief solar deity in Hinduism and generally refers to the Sun.^[3]

Surya is the chief of the Navagraha, the nine Indian Classical planets and important elements of Hindu astrology. He is often depicted riding a chariot harnessed by seven horses^[1] which might represent the seven colors of the rainbow or the seven chakras in the body. He is also the presiding deity of Sunday. Surya is regarded as the Supreme Deity by Saura sect and Smartas worship him as one of the five primary forms of God.

1 Depictions

1.1 Arka form

“Arka” form is worshiped mostly in North India and Eastern parts of India. The temples dedicated to the 'Arka' form of Surya are [Konark Temple](#) in Orissa, [Uttararka](#) and [Lolarka](#) in [Uttar Pradesh](#), and [Balarka](#) in [Rajasthan](#). There was an old sun temple in [Bahraich](#), [Uttar Pradesh](#) named [Balarka Surya Mandir](#), built by King [Tilokchand Arkawanshi](#) in early 10th century AD which was destroyed in the 14th century during the Turkish invasions. The Surya temple in [Konark](#) was built by [Ganga Vamsi king Narasimha Dev](#). [Sun Temple, Modhera](#) in [Gujarat](#) was built in 1026 AD by King [Bhimdev](#) of [Solanki dynasty](#).

1.2 Mitra form

Surya is also known as “Mitra” (meaning friend) for his life nourishing properties. The Mitra form of 'Surya' had been worshiped mostly in [Gujarat](#), where a clan of [Suryawanshi](#) kings was known as [Mitravanshi kshatriyas](#), also known by its derivative name “[Maitrakas](#)”.



Surya sculpture

2 Religious role and relations

See also: [Ratha Saptami](#)

Surya had three wives namely [Saranyu](#), [Ragyi](#) and [Prabha](#). [Saranyu](#) was the mother of [Vaivasvata Manu](#) (the seventh, i.e. present [Manu](#)) and the twins [Yama](#) (the Lord of Death) and his sister [Yami](#). She also bore him the twins known as the [Ashvins](#), divine horsemen and physicians to the [Devas](#). [Saranyu](#), being unable to bear the extreme radiance of [Surya](#), created a superficial entity from her shadow called *Chhaya* and instructed her to act as [Surya](#)’s wife in her absence. *Chhaya* mothered two sons [Savarni Manu](#) (the eighth, i.e. next [Manu](#)) and [Shani](#) (the planet [Saturn](#)), and two daughters, [Tapti](#) and [Vishti](#).^[4] He also has two more sons, [Revanta](#) with [Ragyi](#), and [Prabhata](#) with [Prabha](#).

[Surya](#)’s two sons, [Shani](#) and [Yama](#), are responsible for



Surya with consorts Saranyu and Chhaya

the judgment of human life. Shani provides the results of one's deeds during one's life through appropriate punishments and rewards while Yama grants the results of one's deeds after death.^[5]

Like some other deities, such as Shiva, who are worshiped by saints, normal worshipers and demons, Surya too has a following of the same types of beings. Group of Raksasas known as Yatudhanas were the followers of Surya and wandered with him.^[6] It is also mentioned that Bhauvana the Daitya offered a prayer to Surya with the Rathantara saman and was immediately turned into an elephant.^[6] His Greek counterpart is Helios and his Egyptian counterpart is Ra. There is said to be a community among Aryans called Okkot who worship Surya. In the Mahabharata, Princess Kunti receives instruction for a mantra from the sage Durvasa; by reciting which, she would be able to summon any god and bear a child by him. Incredulous of the power of this mantra, Kunti unwittingly tests it on Surya, but when Surya appears, she gets scared and requests him to go back. However, Surya has an obligation to fulfil the mantra before returning. Surya miraculously causes Kunti to bear the child immediately whilst retaining her virginity so that she, as an unmarried princess, need not face any embarrassment or be subjected to questions from society. Kunti feels compelled to abandon the child, Karna, who grows up to become one of the central characters in the great battle of Kurukshetra.

3 Representation in scriptures

In the Ramayana, Surya is described as father of the King Sugriva, who helped Rama and Lakshmana in defeating the demon king Ravana. He also trains Hanuman. The Suryavanshi dynasty of kings, Rama being one of them, also claims descent from Surya.

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In the Vedas, Surya is frequently referred to as "the eye of Mitra, Varuna, and Agni" (RV 1.115.1, RV 6.51.1, RV 7.63.1, WYV 4.35, WYV 7.42, WYV 13.46, AV 13.2.35). Lord Surya is also considered to be the eye of the Virat Purusha (Lord Sri Krishna's Universal Form).

4 In astrology

In Vedic astrology Surya is considered a mild malefic on account of his hot, dry nature. Surya represents soul, will-power, fame, the eyes, general vitality, courage, kingship, father, highly placed persons and authority. He is exalted in the sign Mesha, is in mulatrikona in the sign Simha and is in debilitation in the sign Tula. Surya is lord of three nakshatras or lunar mansions: Kritika, Uttara Phalguni and Uttara Ashadha. Surya has the following associations: the colors – copper or red, the metals – gold or brass, the gemstone – ruby, the direction – east and the season of summer. The food grain associated with him is wheat.

5 Sun Temples

See also: Konark Sun Temple, Buguda Biranchinarayan Temple, Martand Sun Temple, Multan Sun Temple and Sun Temple, Modhera

There are Surya temples all across India. The most famous is the World Heritage Site of the Sun Temple, Konark, Orissa. Besides Konark, there are two other sun temples in Orissa called Biranchi Narayan Sun Temple^[7] in Buguda, Ganjam District and Biranchinarayan Temple, Palia, Bhadrak.

There are sun temples in Modhera, Gujarat, created by



Sun Temple, Modhera

King Bhimdev of the Solanki dynasty, in Arasavalli, Andhra Pradesh, Kanakaditya Temple in Kasheli (Dist. Sindhudurg) – Maharashtra, near the famous Galtaji's temple in Jaipur, Rajasthan and in clusters of Navagraha temples in Tamil Nadu and Assam. The Sun Temple at Martand in Jammu and Kashmir and Sun Temple of Multan are temples which were destroyed. The only and the famous Surya temple in northern India is Kattarmal surya mandir in Almora District, Uttarakhand created by King Kattarmal in the 12th century.

The Gurjars were essentially sun worshipers and some of the sun temples were erected by them during the medieval period.^[8] The sun temple known as *Jayaditya* was constructed by Gurjar king of Nandipuri, Jayabhatta II. This temple is situated at Kotipura near Kapika in the Bharukachha district.^[9] The Surya temple of Bhinmal known as *Jagaswami Surya temple* was also erected during this period.^[10]

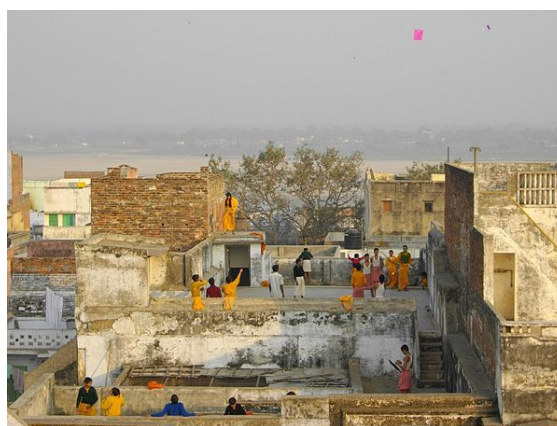


Konark Sun Temple Panoramic View

6 Festivals



Pongal in Tamil Nadu



Kite flying in Varanasi

There are Various Festivals dedicated to Sun God Surya in India.

Pongal or Makara Sankranti is the most widely celebrated Hindu festival dedicated to the Sun God. It is celebrated as Makara Sankranti in many parts of India and as Pongal by Tamils all over the world. People thank the Sun God for ensuring a good harvest and dedicate the first grain to him.

Chhath is another Hindu Festival dedicated to Surya. It is believed to started by **Karna**, the son of Surya, who became a great warrior and fought against the Pandavas in the Kurukshetra War. Chhath is unique to Bihar, Jharkhand and the some Parts of Uttar Pradesh and Nepal.

Samba Dashami is another festival celebrated in the eastern coastal state of Orissa in the honour of Samba, the son of Krishna who got cured from leprosy by praying to Surya.

Ratha Saptami is a Hindu festival that falls on the Seventh day (Saptami) of the bright half of the Hindu month Maagha.^[11] This day is also known as Surya Jayanti because it celebrates the power of the Sun God.

Women in Goa observe *Ayur Puja* (*Ayur* is a Konkani word for Sunday, from Sanskrit *Adityavasara*) on Sun-

days of the Hindu Lunar month of Shravana.^[12] Known as *Aditya Vrata* in Sanskrit this observance is known as *Aditya Ranubai* in Maharashtra.^[13] *Aditya* and his consort *Rajni* are invoked on these days.

7 Surya Namaskar



Sculpture depicting 12 asana's of Surya Namaskara A in Terminal T3 at IGIA Airport, New Delhi, India, created by Nikhil Bhandari.^[14]

A well-known Hindu mode of worship of the devotional movements of Surya is done at the rising of the Sun, known as *Sūrya namaskāra* (sun salutation). Ten yogic postures are assumed in successive flowing movements to complete one namaskar. Twelve sacred Hindu mantras uttered and for each mantra one complete namaskar is done. Ancient practice is to do 108 namaskaras a day. It is considered most auspicious by Hindus to do this.

The 12 mantras for surya namaskara:

1. ॐ मतिराय नमः *Om mitrāya namah*
2. ॐ रवये नमः *Om ravayé namah*
3. ॐ सूर्याय नमः *Om sūryāya namah*
4. ॐ भानवे नमः *Om bhānavé namah*
5. ॐ खगाय नमः *Om khagāya namah*
6. ॐ पूषणे नमः *Om pūṣṇé namah*
7. ॐ हरिण्यगर्भाय नमः *Om hiraṇyagarbhāya namah*
8. ॐ मरीचये नमः *Om marīchayé namah*
9. ॐ आदित्याय नमः *Om ādityāya namah*
10. ॐ सवतिरे नमः *Om savitré namah*
11. ॐ अर्काय नमः *Om arkāya namah*
12. ॐ भास्कराय नमः *Om bhāskarāya namah*

The *Gayatri Mantra* is associated with Surya.^[15] Another hymn associated with Surya is the *Aditya Hridayam*, recited by the great sage *Agastya* to *Rama* on the warfield before the fight with *Ravana*.

8 See also

- Hindu deities

9 References

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10 External links

- An ancient hymn to Surya – from the *Rig Veda*
- Weekly podcast on Vedic Chanting and Vedic Mythology with stories from the Puranas
- Surya Upanishad (Wikisource)

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