

The light in the sun, which illuminates the whole universe, that which is in the moon and that which is in the fire, know that all that light is Mine.

Swāmi Nikhilananda, in his general introduction to the *Upanishads* (1:86), discusses Brahman and says of the sun:

"Of all the phenomenal objects, the sun was regarded with the greatest wonder and admiration by the ancients everywhere. Its rays dispel darkness, and the daytime is generally filled with various activities by which a civilization is created and developed.

"The Upanishads describe the Sun as a symbol of Brahman. The Gayatrī mantra is directed to the Puruṣa dwelling in the Sun. The natural sunlight is a symbol of spiritual light. The natural sun is the phenomenal form of Brahman."

"SAVITĀ' literally means stimulator, rouser and vivifier. He is sometimes equated with sūrya. According to Sāyaṇa, the sun before rising is called Savitar, and after rising till its setting, Sūrya." (Monier-Williams)

We may safely say that what we perceive with our physical external organs is the sun, while what can be known only through the internal organs, the intellect, is Savitā. One is concrete; the other is abstract. Savitā is the power of sun.

Sāvitrī Mantra (Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad 5. 14. 1-8) presents detail on Sacred Gayatrī:

The most celebrated Vedic prayer, the Sāvitrī mantra, commonly known as the Gayatrī mantra, is dedicated to Lord Savitā.

The worshipper invokes his blessings to receive the energy for the mind to make it introvert, so that he is able to meditate upon the mighty, majestic effulgence of God Savitar to achieve intellectual enlightenment.

The great glory of gorgeous God Savitar has been sung not only in the Vedas and Upaniṣads, but also in the Epics and Purāṇas. The first and foremost Sanskrit poet, Vālmiki, in his monumental magnum opus, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, has brought forth visible and invisible power of the Sun: how He helped his hero, Rāmacandra, to score victory over destructive demon Rāvaṇa.

**“Sun
before rising is
called Savitar, and
after rising till its
setting, Surya.”**

-based on Sāyaṇa

Bhagavān Rāmacandra had been engaged in a fierce fighting with Rāvaṇa for quite some time. He was not able to subdue his enemy. Actually, he was fighting as a human being to honor the boon given to Rāvaṇa by Brahmā. He could not utilize His mighty power that he possessed. He was feeling tired. He was exhausted; feeling helpless. He was awfully worried. He was puzzled and did not know what to do. How to conquer the foe who was proving so unconquerable? (Rāvaṇa had an *amṛtakalaśa* in his belly.)

Sage Agastya visits Rāmacandra on the battlefield. He instructs Rāmacandra to offer his prayers to Lord Savitā. Rāmacandra follows the instruction. He acts accordingly. And he scores victory! This is

the power and potential of the great God Savitā.

ध्येयः सदा सवितुमण्डलमध्यवर्ती
नारायणः सरसिजासनसन्निविष्टः ।
केयूरवान् मकरकुण्डलवान् किरीटी
हारी हिरण्मयवपुर्धृतशङ्खचक्रः ॥

Dhyeyaḥ sadā
Savitṛmaṇḍalamadhyavartī
Nārāyaṇaḥ
sarasijāsanasanniviṣṭaḥ.
Keyūravān makarakuṇḍalavān
kirītī
Hārī hiraṇmayavapur
dhṛtaśaṅkhacakraḥ.

This is a Puranic prayer in praise of Lord Nārāyaṇa, who inhabits the center of the Savitṛmaṇḍala (Sūrya's Orb). He is to be always meditated upon. He is seated on a lotus seat, is bedecked with beautiful armlets, ear ornaments shaped as makara (crocodile) and a pearl necklace. He wears a kirīta (an ornamental crown) over the head. His body is all gold. He holds a conch-shell and a discus. This Nārāyaṇa is to be worshipped always by all.

Even the most common people in India use the epithet "Sūryanārāyaṇa" to denote their beloved God, the Sun.

There are many traditions still prevailing in India. It is believed that Sūrya protects and maintains the law and order of the whole universe. On special sacraments, people go out in the open to have his darśana (view) and adore him with prayers for blessings.

All over India, faithful devotees go to the nearest reservoir of water in order to worship the rising sun and pray for their health, happiness and welfare. Some would prostrate twelve times or more and offer Sūrya namaskāra, which combines worship and exercise. ☺