

## **Importance of Radhasapthami**

Radhasapthami is an auspicious festival celebrated by Hindus and it is dedicated to Lord Suryanarayana. It is during this time that Surya/Sun moves from the southeast to the northeast. We worship Lord Suryanarayana for better health and well-being. Radhasapthami is symbolic of the change of season to spring and the start of the harvesting season. For most Indian farmers, it is an auspicious beginning of the New harvest Year. The festival is observed by all Hindus in their houses and in innumerable temples dedicated to Surya, across India. In 2020, this day falls on Feb 1<sup>st</sup>. These are called Uttarayanam(the first half of the year) and Dakshinayanam(the second half of the year). The first half is considered most auspicious than the second half of the year. This is the day that Surya was born to sage Kashyapa and his wife Adithi.

### **Significance**

Surya is considered as an important god because he is the source of life. That's why he is placed in the center of navagrahas (nine planets). Scientists found out that sun is the center of all nine planets and all of them orbit around the sun. Our sages found out this truth thousands of years ago and mentioned at several places in the Hindu scriptures. In fact, the characteristics of the sun and all the nine planets have been clearly described in the Vedas. One can identify these characteristics in the "navagrahamantra", and are similar to what the NASA scientist described in their research findings. This is a great testimony to state that many aspects of Hindu faith are scientifically important.

### **What should we do**

As the lord is the Sun god himself, we should wake up early in the morning before sunrise, bathe and offer oblations to the Lord? Women put rangoli with a representation of Sun God with 7 horses in a chariot in front of their homes. Erukkam Leaf (Arka Leaf) is another important aspect in this day. Married women will take holy bath by placing 7 erukkam leaves on their body along with a pinch of turmeric and pacharisi (Raw rice) on top of the leaf. One leaf is kept on the head, two on the shoulders, two on the knees and two on the foot while having a bath. Men will take bath with only erukkam leaves and rice without turmeric.

### **Importance of Worshipping Suryanarayana in the Scriptures**

Many people worship Surya because he is called as "Aarogya and Aishwarya Datha" (provider of health and wealth). Surya is worshipped early in the morning while fresh sunrays emerge. It is believed and proven that exposure to fresh sunrays rejuvenate energy and purify the mind and body. That's why many Hindus do suryanamaskaras (12 postures of prostrating to Surya) early morning when sunrays are fresh. Scientifically also it is recommended that there are many benefits of getting exposed to early morning sun.

### **Sthotras and prayers**

Vedas provided us with sthотras like Aditya Hridayam, Surya Ashtakam, Surya Shatakam, etc. and reciting them will bring lot of benefits to people in terms health, wealth and success. In TaittareeyaAaranyakam there is ArunaPrashna which is one of the powerful chanting's associated with praying to Surya. In fact, sage Agasthya advised Lord Rama to worship Surya to win the war against Ravana. Sage Agasthya gives Lord Rama Aditya Hridayamupadesha(teaching) before the war began.