



Sun and Light in Spiritual Traditions

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The Quran, Surah 24:35

"GOD is the light of heaven and earth: the similitude of his light is as a niche in a wall, wherein a lamp is placed, and the lamp enclosed in a case of glass; the glass appears as it were a shining star. It is lighted with the oil of a blessed tree, an olive neither of the east, nor of the west: it wanteth little but that the oil thereof would give light, although no fire touched it. This is light added unto light: a GOD will direct unto his light whom he pleaseth. GOD propoundeth parables unto men; for GOD knoweth all things."

"Allah's essence is the original creative Light, always illuminating existence. It constantly manifests the universe and energizes it. Allah's Essential Light radiates the whole

cosmos in abundant beauty and completeness. To be illuminated by this process means nothing less than salvation."

- Persian philosopher [Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi](#)

Creation of light in Genesis 1:1-5, 14-19

"When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness God called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.... And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day."

First reference to the sun - Genesis 15:12. "As the sun was going down"

Last reference is in the New Testament's Revelation to John The Divine, "They need no light of lamp or sun"

Over 150 references to the sun in the Bible, 25 of those in the New Testament

Father Sun, My Heart

Dear Father Sun,

Your infinite light is the nourishing source of all species. You are our sun, our source of limitless light and life. Your light shines upon Mother Earth offering us warmth and beauty, helping Mother Earth to nourish us and make life possible for all species. Looking deeply into Mother Earth, I see you in Mother Earth. You aren't only in the sky but you are also ever-present in Mother Earth and in me. (Continued [here](#).)

- Thich Nhat Hanh

The Sound of the Sun

It makes one all right, though you hadn't thought of it,
a sound like the sound of the sky on fire, like Armageddon,
whistling and crackling, the explosions of sunlight booming
as the huge mass of gas rages into the emptiness around it.
It isn't a sound you are often aware of, though the light speeds
to us in seconds, each dawn leaping easily across a chasm
of space that swallows the sound of that sphere, but
if you listen closely some morning, when the sun swells
over the horizon and the world is still and still asleep,
you might hear it, a faint noise so far inside your mind
that it must come from somewhere, from light rushing to darkness,
energy burning towards entropy, towards a peaceful solution,
burning brilliantly, spontaneously, in the middle of nowhere,
and you, too, must make a sound that is somewhat like it,
though that, of course, you have no way of hearing at all.

- George Bradley

Solar

On a gray day, when the sun
has been abducted, and it's chill
end-of-the-world weather,
I must be the sun.
I must be the one
to encourage the young
sidetracked physicist
working his father's cash register
to come up with a law of nature
that says brain waves can change
the dismal sky. I must be the one
to remind the ginger plant
not to rest on the reputation
of its pungent roots, but to unveil
those buttery tendrils from the other world.

When the sky is an iron lid
I must be the one to simmer
in the piquant juices of possibility,
though the ingredients are unknown
and the day begins with a yawn.
I must issue forth a warmth
without discrimination, and any guarantee
it will come back to me.
On a dark day I must be willing
to keep my disposition light,
I have to be at the very least
one stray intact ray
of local energy, one small
but critical fraction
of illumination. Even on a day
that doesn't look gray
but still lacks comfort or sense,
I have to be the sun,
I have to shine as if
sorry life itself depended on it.
I have to make all the difference.

- Thomas Centolella

Solar Realities

The sun is ninety-nine per-cent
the mass of our solar system,
her gravity tethering
planets to her orbit;

Our solar sphere guides
the diurnal life cycle of plants;

The sun, often a female,
was the core of Sumerian,
Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Aztec,
Incan, Druidic religions;

In Norse the sun is “sunno” or
“sunnon”; In Celtic she is “grian”
and in Sanskrit, “surya”;

Our sun is the brightest star
in the Milky Way, 333,000 times
more massive than earth;

she is a member of a group
of luminous, hot, young stars
in the spiral arms of our galaxy;

ninety-nine degrees of her thermal energy
comes from nuclear fusion;
from chromosphere to photosphere
to corona at 8 million K temperature
she is a heliosphere in spiral shape,
formed five billion years ago, her
brilliance intensifying over
a multitude of years;

Her galactic motion leans
toward vega in
constellation lyra, sixty degrees
from galactic center,
oscillating on a galactic plane;

Our solar system takes a galactic year
of two hundred fifty million years to complete
an orbit around the Milky Way;

in human history the sun
was a supernatural deity
tied to time, seasons, cycles of life;
In Mesopotamia
Utu was a solar and justice deity;
in Babylonia she was Shamash;

in Arabia she was Shemesh,
among Incans, Mayans, Aztecs

she was venerated with differing names;

among Greeks she was Helios,
and became the male deity, Apollo;
in Egypt she was “atum” and “ra-atum”;

among Romans she was “sol”,
Sol Invictus, Unconquered Sun,
her birthday, the winter solstice;

In Chinese she was “tai yang gona,”
Grandfather Sun, Lord of the Solar Palace;

The megaliths in Ireland adjusted to
her solar passage: their Gaelic name: “bruig na boinne”,
the English name, Newgrange,
aged five millennia ago;

in Britain, she was Stonehenge,
a solar observatory,
in Mexico, “chichen itza”,
in Peru, “chankillo,” two millenia old;

telescopes probe
our solar orb, penetrating
with space telescopes, missing
only mystical awe
that imbued our ancestral beliefs.

- Aedh Eamon

...

Winter Sun

How valuable it is in these short days,
threading through empty maple branches,
the lacy-needled sugar pines.

Its glint off sheets of ice tells the story
of Death’s brightness, her bitter cold.

We can make do with so little, just the hint
of warmth, the slanted light.

The way we stand there, soaking in it,
mittened fingers reaching.

And how carefully we gather what we can
to offer later, in darkness, one body to another.

- Molly Fisk

Good Morning

Get out of bed.
The day has been
asking about you.

It dragged the sun into your
room this morning,

pulled an entire disco of light
through your curtains,

hoping that all this gleam
would be enough to get your attention.

This is how today says,
Notice me.

- Rudy Francisco

The sun,
with all those planets
revolving around it and
dependent on it,
can still ripen a bunch of grapes
as if it had nothing else

in the universe to do.

- Galileo Galilei

“I am the sun. I am love at its boiling point.”

A Love Letter from the Sun

I cried the day Icarus died.
When that small bundle of earth
placed my love in his path
I tried to stop him. I wanted him to know
I loved him but he didn't have to kill
himself getting closer to me.
As my heart melted his wax wings
I could not dim my sparks in sorrow.
I tried. I shot rays like asteroids
trying to break myself apart.
But I burned the same temperature.

I always do.

You earth children, fragile mounds
of dirt and breath, you stole my heart.
The way you feed strays I feed you
every day. When Icarus fell, I prayed
every nation would see him, four limbed
not star but flaming body. I wanted you
to know a love this fierce takes prisoners.
I love you 93 million miles.
I love you generations.
The love I have is more than
what you have dwells in your ring fingers
or when you rock your little ones. This love
does not dim. I am the sun. I am love at its boiling point.

If I could burn for you any less
if I could trap my Cupid arrows
within my atmosphere, I would.

Your four chambered hearts
do not know how much I care for you.
When you first discovered
heat makes flame, I rejoiced.
When I saw your first fireworks,
I thought you were joking.
When I saw your smokestacks
lit the sky I told myself
you were jealous of the clouds.
But when the first atom bomb sunrose
over the New Mexico desert
I wanted to shrivel.

You had outgrown my love
and like a parent, if I could suicide
from the edge of your ecosystem
to save you, I would, children.
I love you more than my own elements.

You are earth air yet you crush your earth
and poison your air. I watched your heat
burn oceans until the plumes obscured my view
your fever only wetting your desire for heat.
I tried to wean you from your addiction
but my love was not enough for you.
You have been killing yourself
since the first industrial revolution.

What will it take, my children
to teach you I will always burn?
If there is an Icarus among you
who can fly to me until the heat
of my love melts his wings
will you know then that I have never
meant ill to your kind? Will you slow
your march toward burning?

If I could cry icicles
to lower your temperature
I would, children. When you die

I will still be here
burning
remembering
wishing
that if only I loved you less
I could have saved you.
But I am sun. I burn.

- Hillary Kobernick

Even After All This Time

Even after
all this time,
the Sun never says to the Earth,

"You owe me."

Look what happens
with a love like that:

It lights the whole sky.

- Hafiz & Daniel Ladinsky

Solar

Suspended lion face
spilling at the centre
of an unfurnished sky.
How still you stand,
and how unaided.
Single stalkless flower
you pour unrecompensed.

The eye sees you
simplified by distance

into an origin,
your petalled head of flames
continuously exploding.
Heat is the echo of your
gold.

Coined there among
lonely horizontals
you exist openly.
Our needs hourly
climb and return like angels.
Unclosing like a hand,
you give for ever.

- Philip Larkin

Everything Is Going to Be Alright

How should I not be glad to contemplate
the clouds clearing beyond the dormer window
and a high tide reflected on the ceiling?
There will be dying, there will be dying,
but there is no need to go into that.
The poems flow from the hand unbidden
and the hidden source is the watchful heart.
The sun rises in spite of everything
and the far cities are beautiful and bright.
I lie here in a riot of sunlight
watching the day break and the clouds flying.
Everything is going to be all right.

- Derek Mahon

Sunrise

You can
die for it –
an idea,

or the world. People

have done so,
brilliantly,
letting
their small bodies be bound

to the stake,
creating
an unforgettable
fury of light. But

this morning,
climbing the familiar hills
in the familiar
fabric of dawn, I thought

of China,
and India
and Europe, and I thought
how the sun

blazes
for everyone just
so joyfully
as it rises

under the lashes
of my own eyes, and I thought
I am so many!
What is my name?

What is the name
of the deep breath I would take
over and over
for all of us? Call it

whatever you want, it is
happiness, it is another one
of the ways to enter

fire.

- Mary Oliver

The Sun

Have you ever seen
anything
in your life
more wonderful

than the way the sun,
every evening,
relaxed and easy,
floats toward the horizon

and into the clouds or the hills,
or the ruffled sea,
and is gone –
and how it slides again

out of the blackness,
every morning,
on the other side of the world,
like a red flower

streaming upward on its heavenly oils,
say, on a morning in early summer,
at its perfect imperial distance –
and have you ever felt for anything
such wild love –
do you think there is anywhere, in any language,
a word billowing enough
for the pleasure

that fills you,
as the sun
reaches out,
as it warms you

as you stand there,
empty-handed –
or have you too
turned from this world –

or have you too
gone crazy
for power,
for things?

- Mary Oliver

Why I Wake Early

Hello, sun in my face.
Hello, you who make the morning
and spread it over the fields
and into the faces of the tulips
and the nodding morning glories,
and into the windows of, even, the
miserable and crotchety –

best preacher that ever was,
dear star, that just happens
to be where you are in the universe
to keep us from ever-darkness,
to ease us with warm touching,
to hold us in the great hands of light –
good morning, good morning, good morning.

Watch, now, how I start the day
in happiness, in kindness.

- Mary Oliver

The Energy Sources

by Gangadharan nair Pulingat

Sun the great source of energy
That we are to be thankful everyday
Sun salutations, programmed by sages
The ancient wisdom high lightens sun
They were not well equipped
But they knew what the world's existence
The source of greenery of the planet
Vital for life sources to exist
Where sun rays are in a little short
By the shades of trees and bushes
The plants reluctant to go upward
They knew their existence well
Sun the great source of cosmic power
The system well works without help
But we makes the atmosphere
Where ozone layer depletion threatens
The great source of energy if opens eyes
The world will be in difficult to sustain
Conserve the energy everywhere we needs
The sun we can say thankful to nature.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made,
And first my lord Brother Sun,
Who brings the day; and light you give to us through him.
How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

- St. Francis of Assisi, Canticle of the Creatures (excerpt)

