



વોશ્વા હિન્દુ પારિશદ (પ્રે) વર્તમાન સમાજના હિન્દુ



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INTRODUCTION:

Makkar Sankraanti or Maghi, is a festival in the Vedic calendar dedicated to the deity Surya i.e., the Sun. In most years it is celebrated on 14th January. Each year, it is observed in the lunar month of Magha which corresponds with the month of January as per the Gregorian calendar and is a day the Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and other people of Vedic Parampara celebrate their harvests. It marks the first day of the sun's transit into Makkar Raashi i.e., Capricorn, marking the end of the month with the winter solstice and the start of longer days.

Sankraanti is a Sanskrit word and one of the meanings is 'The actual passage of the Sun or other planetary bodies from one sign of the Zodiac into another'.

The earth, during its orbit around the sun, spins on its axis, each rotation lasting 6 months - during these 6 months, one hemisphere nears just a little towards the Sun; during the next 6 months it inches just a little away from the Sun. Hence the lengthening of day vs night (and whether it is winter or summer) is experienced in an opposite fashion in the northern (Uttaraayana & observe Makkar Sankranti) and southern (Dakshinayan observing Karka Sankranti) hemispheres.

Therefore the festival has spiritual as well as astronomical significance.

SIGNIFICANCE: SOLAR CYCLE:

Scientifically, currently in the Northern Hemisphere, winter solstice occurs between 21st and 22nd December. Day light begins to increase on this day,

Due to the axial precession of the Earth, coming earlier by approximate 1 day in every 70 years, the date of the winter Solstice changes gradually.

Hence, if the Makkar Sankraanti at some point of time did mark the day after the actual winter solstice, a date in mid-January would correspond to around 300CE,

Makkar Sankraanti, is also one of the very few ancient Hindu & Vedic festivals that has been observed according to solar cycles, while most festivals are set by the lunar cycle of the lunisolar. Being a festival that celebrates the solar cycle, it almost always falls on the same Gregorian date every year (January 14/15), except in some years when the date shifts by a day for that year.

The significance of Makkar Sankraanti is also mentioned in Puranas that on this day Maharshi Bhagiratha, a legendary Rishi of the Ikshvaku dynasty, **descended on earth with Maa Ganga, through Bhagwan Shivji's Jatta to break the force of the sacred river.**

The significance of Surya, Sun can be traced to the Vedic texts, particularly the **Gayatri Mantra**, a sacred Vedic Mantra found in the Rigveda.



SWAMI VIVEKANADA JI

Swami Vivekananda ji was born on the 12th of January 1863 during the festival of Makkar Sankraanti. Swami ji was the main person responsible for the re-introduction of Vedanta, Yoga and reviving true Hindu Dharma and raising awareness and the status of Hindu Dharma as a major world Dharma in the West.

In the late 19th Century, Swami Vivekananda ji was the major force in the revival of Hindu Dharma in Bharat and all over the world, and contributed to the concept of Bharatiya Nationalism, which was eventually used to gain freedom from the British Empire in colonial Bharat.

Hence, the birth of Swami Vivekananda ji during Makkar Sankraanti is looked upon as an inspiring indication of the passing of the long 'dark' period of Hindu Dharma and the birth of an era of resurgent Hindu Dharma, hopefully, devoid of superstitions and untrue

myths. – Tama Soma Jyotir Gamaya – Light emerges from darkness just as sunlight dispels the night's darkness – just as positive energy removes negative thoughts in our mind.

Swami Vivekananda, the modern Rishi Sant bringing Vedanta to the West, and the inspirer of Hindu Dharma renaissance.

For more information - <https://www.vrmvk.org/> and <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Vivekananda>



GURU GOBIND SINGH MAHARAJ (THE TENTH SIKH GURU) JAYANTI

In this auspicious time of Makkar Sankraanti we also remember one of the great saviours of Hindu Dharma, Guru Gobind Singhji Maharaj. He is the Sant, Yodha in the mould of Bhagwan Shree Rama. He is revered as a Dharmic inspiration, one who stopped Bharat from turning into a Mughal fiefdom. He and his brave heart sons sacrificed their lives to uphold Dharma.

Guru Gobind Singhji's famous writing, Bichitar Naatak, which is part of his Epoch Sacred Darshan, Dasham Granth, states:

The story of Ram is immortal and everyone should read it. Ram went to heaven along with the whole city. Whoever listens to or sings His story, will be free of sin and sorrow - Ram katha jug jug atal - Sab koi bhakhat net Suragbas Raghuver kara, Sagri puri samet Jo en Katha sune aur gaave, Dukh paap tah nikat na aave - राम की कहानी अमर है और प्रत्येक को इसे पढ़ना चाहिए । राम पूरे शहर के साथ स्वर्ग गए। जो कोई भी उनकी कहानी सुनता या गाता है, वह पाप और दुःख से मुक्त होगा । राम कथा जुग जुग अटल है ।

The Khalsa sect will roar around the world. Hindu Dharma will awaken, its enemies will flee. - Sakal jagat main Khalsa Panth gaaje, Jaage Dharam Hindu sakal bhand bhaje - खालसा पंथ विश्व भर में गरजे गा । हिन्दु धर्म जागृत होगा, उसके दुश्मन भाग जाएंगे - सकल जगत में खालसा पंथ गाजे, जागे धरम हिन्दु साकल भांड भजे ।

http://hindupedia.com/en/Sikh_Dharm

It is also noteworthy to know that all the Sikh Gurus were descendants of King Dashrath, the Raghu Vansha

<https://hindudharma.in/sikh-guru-were-descendants-of-king-dasrath/>

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS:



Photo courtesy: The Indian Express

This festival is very popular all over the world where Bharatiyas reside. The festivities associated with Makar Sankranti are known by various names, such as Maghe Sankranti in Nepal, Magh Bihu in Assam, Maghi, preceded by Lohri in the Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, Lohri, the lighting of bonfire, signifying the coming of brighter days, prosperity after a good harvest, and paying obeisance to Surya Dev

Sukarat in central India, Thai Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Ghughuti in Uttaraakhand or simply as 'Makkar Sankranti' in Odisha, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, also called Pedda Pandaga, Telangana, West Bengal, also called Poush Sankranti, and Uttar Pradesh also called Khichdi Sankranti.

Social and cultural festivities associated with the festival range from colourful decorations, rural children going from house to house, singing the praise of Surya Dev and receiving TILGUD as Prasadam in return, or pocket money, to go to fairs i.e., Melas, dances, kite flying, bonfires or Lohri and feasts.



Patang Mahotsav in Gujarat

Patang Mahotsav in Gujarat celebrating Makkar Sankranti

Many observers go to sacred rivers or lakes and have a ceremonial bath to express their gratitude to the Sun. The dip in the rivers is believed to result in merit or absolution of past sins and prayers to the Sun is to thank the Sun for success and prosperity.

KHUMBH MELA:

Jupiter makes a complete revolution round the Sun every 12 years and in the 12th year the Hindus observe Makkar Sankranti with one of the world's largest mass pilgrimage.

An estimated 40 to 100 million people attend the event or the Mela. The pilgrims pray to the Sun and bathe at the Prayaga, the confluence (Triveni Sangam) of the Rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the hidden (adrashya) Saraswati at the Khumbh Mela.

The mela is attended by people of all sections and sects of society - including commoners and saints, from over the world, demonstrating the most inspiring testimony to the intrinsic cultural and spiritual unity of the Hindus and other Vedic Paramparaa

This tradition of the Mela is attributed to Adi Shankaracharya.

According to Diana L Eck, professor at Harvard University specializing in Indology, tells us that The Magha Mela, is mentioned in the Mahabharat.

MAHABHARAT:

During the battle of Mahabharat after laying down his weapons and lying on a bed of arrows, Pitamaa Bhishma waited for Makar Sankranti to give up his body.

The belief is that giving up the human body on or during Uttaraayana, the Soul achieves eternal bliss and moksha.

OTHER CULTURAL PRACTICES AND AGRICULTURAL CYCLE

Other shared cultural practices found amongst the Vedic Paramparaa around the world is making of sticky bound sweets particularly from sesame (til) and a sugar base such as jaggery, (gud, gur, also chaku in Nepali). We are all like sesame seeds with extraordinary nutritional qualities, but singly we are dispersed unable to realise the power of collective strength. Hence gud or jaggery, with its sweetness, is used to bind the brilliance of individual sesame seeds to make sweet treat of TILGUD, urging us to have sweet tongue conducive of good diplomacy & behaviour called **VYAHAVAAR KUSHALTA**, having extraordinary strength eternally - **SANGHE SHAKTI YUGE YUGE**.



Til Gud

Til Gud Prasadam, the unifying factor of collective strength

For most parts of Bharat, Nepal, Sri Lanka and other countries in the region, this period is a part of early stages of the Rabi crop – i.e., crops grown in the winter season such as wheat, barley, peas, grams, and mustard. In the agricultural cycle, where crops have been sown and the hard work in the fields is mostly over.

The time thus signifies a period of socializing and families enjoying each other's company, taking care of the cattle, and celebrating around bonfires Lohri in the Punjab. In Maharashtra and Gujarat the festival is celebrated by flying kites, Patang Mahotsava.

SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE: FROM THE BOOK – OUR FESTIVALS*¹

At a deeper level, the significance associated with the lengthening days i.e., more light, with the extra daylight, carries a vital importance for national welfare - "it is the warmth of love and fraternity among the peoples of the country that ultimately makes them stand up in unison in adversity or prosperity". * 1

Secondly, Sankranti, signifying light, also gives the message of intellectual illumination, hopefully leading to ability to discriminate between right and wrong, just and unjust, truth and falsehood, virtue and vice i.e., **VIVEKA**.

The 'new light' rouses, physical, mental, and intellectual faculties in individuals, leading to vigour and vitality in all activities. Makar Sankranti, therefore awakens all the latent powers in an individual, which collectively can lead to the well-being of the society as a whole.

Very briefly, spiritually, this supreme light and intelligence combined with the warmth of the heart ultimately leads to the all-round human harmony and happiness.

Makar Sankranti and its related activities especially bathing in the holy rivers, Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, Narmada, Gomti and Kaveri is, regarded important for SPIRITUAL practices as well.

Overall Makar Sankranti is a very significant festival and we can all learn from every aspect of it.



****1 Respected Late Shri H V Seshadri Ji is one of the most intellectual thinkers and philosophers of the last Era, helping to establish a correct narrative of Hindu Culture & Dharma, dispelling certain aspects of false aspects of it as propagated by historians of the left & colonial social spectrum. From his book titled Our Festivals.***

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