



Makara Sankranthi Festival Details

Festival Aspects	Festival Details
Religion	Hinduism
Title	Makara Sankranthi
Description	<p><i>Sankranthi, Pongal, Bihu and Lohri</i> are different names of the festival celebrated in different parts of India to celebrate the end of the winter season and to welcome the spring season and the new year. Although these festivals have different names, the essence of celebration remains the same.</p> <p><i>Makara</i> (Capricorn) <i>Sankranthi</i> (transition) is celebrated in Maharashtra and Gujarat, <i>Bihu</i> in Assam, <i>Pongal</i> in Kerala or South India and <i>Lohri</i> in Punjab or North India. All these are celebrated on the auspicious day of <i>Sankranthi</i>.</p> <p><i>Makara Sankranthi</i> festival is celebrated all over India on 14th or 15th of January, every year. From this day in the Tropic of Capricorn, <i>Makara Sankramana</i> as it is called, the Sun moves from South to North, and, so this summer solstice day is celebrated as an auspicious festival. This northward journey of the Sun is also known as <i>Uttarayana</i> (northward).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- SSSIO – The Inner Significance of Makara Sankranthi</p>
Spiritual Significance	<p><i>Uttarayana</i> day has an outer and inner significance, the inner having a greater value for aspirants for spiritual progress. One's life must be a perpetual spiritual practice and any day is a good day for starting spiritual practices, whether it falls in the southward or northward movements of sun.</p> <p><i>Uttarayana</i> is a quality of the <i>nayana</i> (the eye); it is a matter of attitude. When your sight is on Brahman, it is <i>Uttarayana</i>; when it is on the objective world, it is <i>Dakshinayana</i> (southward). To associate this with the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn is just a convention. But for the real <i>Uttarayana</i>, you must make effort, tremendous efforts. The path is straight and hard, but the goal is glorious. It is nothing less than illumination. When you crave the thought of the Lord and the company of the Godly, then you are in <i>Uttarayana</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 2, #29 (1962)</p> <p>Swami says that on this day, one must be more concerned with one's own journey that is nearing its end with every sunrise. The entry of the Sun into Capricorn has physical, ethical, social and moral significance. North signifies the direction towards <i>Himachala</i>. <i>Himachala</i> is made up of two words: <i>Hima</i> and <i>Achala</i>. <i>Hima</i> means that which is pure and white as snow. <i>Achala</i> means that which is firm and unshakable. Swami says that in a heart that is pure and steady, the sun of intellect enters. There is no need to undertake a journey in the external world. One's northward journey means to turn the intellect inward, towards the heart. This journey is called the quest for liberation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- SSSIO - Festivals - Makara Sankranthi</p>



Prayer	<p>Prayer:</p> <p><i>Asathoma Sath Gamaya</i> <i>Thamasoma Jyothir Gamaya</i> <i>Mruthyorma Amrutham Gamaya</i> <i>Om Shanthi Shanthi Shanthihi</i></p> <p>Meaning: From The Unreal, Lead Me To The Real From Darkness, Lead Me To The Light From Death, Lead Me To Immortality Aum Peace, Peace, Peace</p> <p>- SSSIO Sai Rhythms – Asathoma Sath Gamaya - https://sairhythms.sathyasai.org/song/asathoma-sath-gamaya</p> <p>When we pronounce "<i>Shaanthi, Shaanthi, Shaanthihi</i>," three times, it is prayer for peace of body, mind and the spirit. Though people have been mouthing this prayer for thirty years, they have not found peace, because they have not enshrined peace in their hearts. They must learn to speak sweetly and softly.</p> <p>- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 29, #3 (1996)</p>
Purpose of Rituals	<p>For most parts of India, <i>Sankranthi</i> is also a harvest festival and is celebrated during the early stages of the agricultural season when crops are sown, hard work is done, and it is a time to rejoice. Fairs are organised in various parts of India and in many cities, children and adults enjoy kite flying competitions to celebrate this occasion. Various foods are of course an important part of this celebration and sweet and savory foods are eaten.</p> <p>- SSSIO – The Inner Significance of Makara Sankranthi</p> <p>On this day, people traditionally prepare a special dish, called <i>pongal</i>, which is made of sweet rice cooked in milk. This is considered <i>sathwic</i> (pure) food, which promotes pure thoughts and humility. What we take in through our senses, through our thirst for variegated experiences of the objective world, is all considered food. Swami says that every particle of this intake has to be <i>sathwic</i>, so that one's progress towards Self-realisation is quick and fruitful.</p> <p>Swami reminds us that all rites associated with festivals have an inner meaning. On the <i>Sankranthi</i> day, every home is swept clean and auspicious designs are drawn on the floor with flour. In the middle of the design, a lump of cow dung is placed with a big yellow flower. Swami says that cow dung symbolises the cow, the "<i>Go</i>" which Gopala feeds and fends. "<i>Go</i>" also means individual souls. The inner meaning behind drawing of the designs is that the individual beings are under the loving care of God.</p> <p>- SSSIO - Festivals - Makara Sankranthi</p> <p>Sankranthi is a holy day for many reasons. It was the day on which Adhi Shankara took <i>Sanyasa</i> (renounced all worldly ties and donned the ochre robe). On this day it is the usual custom to offer to people a mixture of jaggery and <i>Thil</i> (sesame). Jaggery is sweet and is a symbol of love. Thil is also</p>



	<p>known as <i>sneha</i>, which means friendship. Therefore, the offer of the jaggery-<i>thil</i> mixture means offering to people love surcharged with friendliness. Develop harmony towards everyone. Much of what passes for friendship today consists in associating with persons when they are affluent and benefiting from their money. When they are in distress, the same persons will not even look at them. This is not friendship at all. True friendship must emanate from the heart and should remain unaffected by weal or woe. In fact, God alone can be an unfailing friend in all situations. He is with you, above you, below you, beside you and around you.</p> <p>- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 25, #4 (1992)</p>
Chant / Song	<p>Song: Lead kindly light, lead me on</p> <p>Through the dark night, to a bright dawn Lead kindly light, lead me on Lead me from unreal unto the real Lead me from darkness to divine light Lead me from death to life eternal (2) Lead me, guide me, Oh love divine <i>Asathoma Sadgamaya</i> <i>Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya</i> <i>Mruthyor Maa Amrutham Gamaya</i> <i>Hari Om, Hari Om, Om Sai Ram (2)</i> (2nd time to "Asathoma...")</p> <p>- SSSIO Sai Rhythms – Lead Kindly Light - https://sairhythms.sathyasai.org/song/lead-kindly-light</p>
Story	<p>From Highway Robber To Sage</p> <p>How does one get over the <i>Thamasik</i> (inaction) quality? There is the example of Rathnakara, who was originally a highway robber harassing and plundering wayfarers. Absence of compassion and consideration for others is the mark of <i>Thamasik</i> nature. Such a person was transformed into a great sage by the contact and teaching of the Seven Sages (Vasishta and others). Not only did he become a sage, he also became an immortal poet, the author of the Ramayana, the epic story of the Rama <i>Avathar</i> (incarnation). The term <i>Kavi</i> (poet) signifies one who has a vision of the past, the present and the future.</p> <p>Valmeeki and Vyasa, by their penance, transcended the three qualities, experienced the Divine and acquired the capacity to envision the three categories of time - the past, the present and the future - thereby they became immortal poets. The company of the good was responsible for the transformation of a totally <i>Thamasik</i> person like Rathnakara into the totally Sathvik sage, Valmeeki. This shows that no one need feel that a <i>Thamasik</i> person cannot become a Sathvik person. For every transformation Divine Grace is the cause. It is possible at one jump to proceed from the <i>Thamasik</i> to the <i>Sathvik</i> nature by Divine Grace and association with Godly persons.</p> <p>- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 29, #26 (1996)</p>



Activity Suggestions	Dressing up for the festival; making kites and writing messages related to reaching high goals; singing and dancing; worshipping Sun God; making Pongal.
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