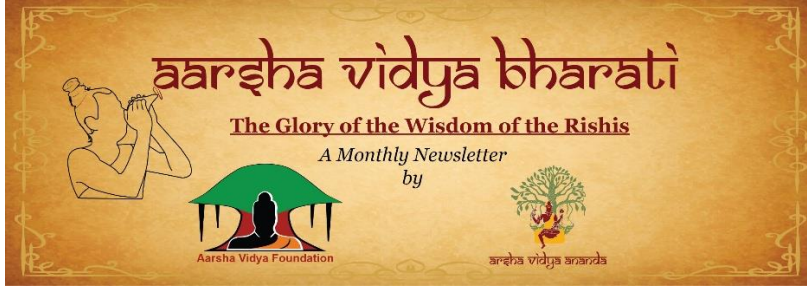


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# Aarsha Vidya Bharati - Jan 2022

## Pausha - Magha 2078

A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



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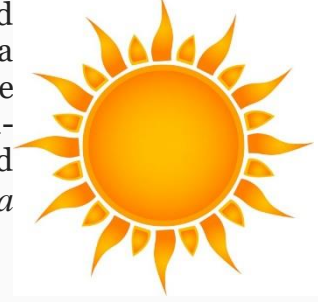
This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [Jan 2022 issue](#) or read any of the articles.

## Living Our Traditions

### Makara Sankrānti

By Pooja Gupte, Thane

The entire Hindu calendar is dotted with festivals and celebrations. Each one with its own significance, its own story, its own unique traditions and customs. We finished celebrating Diwali a little more than a month ago, finding warmth through the countless lamps that we lit, in cold of the winter. And now we look forward to say good-bye to cold and welcome a milder climate of some warmth and sunshine, with another significant festival, the *Makara Sankrānti*.



*Makara Sankrānti* is celebrated in almost all the Hindu cultures in various forms and by various names, not only within India but also in other countries. The festivities associated with *Makara Sankrānti* are known by various names - Magh Bihu in Assam, Maghi (preceded by Lohri) in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, Makara Sankranti in Odisha, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa, West Bengal, Sankranti in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Maghe Sankranti (Nepal), Songkran (Thailand), Thingyan (Myanmar), Mohan Songkran (Cambodia), and Shishur Sankrat (Kashmir).

There are several stories connected with the festival. According to one Lord Vishnu is worshipped on this day because it was on this day that he defeated the asuras and trapped them under Mount *Mandāra*, thus bringing happy times. According to another it was on this day that the River Ganga followed her devotee *Bhagīratha* from the ashram of Sage Kapila and joined the ocean. On this day the Devi killed a rakshasa called *Kiṅkarāsura*. The most well-known event connected to *Makara Sankrānti* is that after the Mahabharata war, *Pitāmah Bhīṣma* waited for this day to give up his body. This is also the day when Lord Surya blessed his son Shani after being upset with him and blessed him with an abode in the *Makara Rāśi* or the zodiac of Capricorn.



Astronomically speaking the festival marks the movement of the Sun from the southern hemisphere to the northern hemisphere and the Sun entering the zodiac of Capricorn. It marks the end of *Dakṣiṇāyana*, the duration where the Sun travels in the southern hemisphere. This duration is also considered the night of the gods and less auspicious. *Makara Sankrānti*, when the sun starts

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travelling in the northern hemisphere, is the beginning of the *Uttarāyana*, the auspicious period. This is considered as the day of the gods. This is the reason why *Pitāmah Bhīṣma* in Mahabharata waited for the sun to begin its journey northwards before he chose his time of death.

We celebrate it by flying kites, lighting bonfires, bathing in holy rivers, worshipping Lord Shiva and Surya, worshipping cattle, making and distributing sweets made from sesame and jaggery and so on. The Kumbh Mela, the world 's largest religious gathering takes place every 12 years at one of following four locations – Haridvar, Prayagraj, Ujjain and Nasik. Amongst the farming communities it is celebrated as a harvest festival.

Let us all welcome and celebrate the festival with the zeal and joy it deserves to be celebrated with.

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