



Sai Dharmam



Bhajan Corner

New Years Gratitude

Sai Bhajan

Sai Hamaaraa Hum Sai Key
Aisaa Prema Hamaaraa,
Sai Raama Hamaaraa Sai
Raama Hamaaraa,
Sathya Sai Hai Naama
Tumhaaraa Shirdi Sai
Avataaraa,
Sai Raama Hamaaraa Sai
Raama Hamaaraa,
Hindu Muslim Sikha ISai
Sabkaa Paalana Haaraa,
Sai Raama Hamaaraa Sai
Raama Hamaaraa

Meaning:

Sai is ours, We are Sai's.
Our love is like this; Sathya
Sai is your name. Shirdi Sai
Avathaara; Hindu, Muslim,
Sikh, Christian, He is the
caretaker of all religions;
Sai Ram is ours.

Thai Pongal this year falls on January the 14th, 2017. 'Thai,' meaning January and 'Pongal,' meaning "to boil over" is a harvest festival. Pongal implies that one's household will boil over with health and prosperity. This festival is celebrated to give thanks to the Sun God who gives the farmer; the common man and woman - food. It is with this sense of gratitude that one celebrates Thai Pongal.

Thai Pongal is celebrated in totality for four days. The first day is known as the Bhogi festival dedicated to Lord Indra who is thought to bring prosperity to the land that the farmers harvest upon. The second day is the traditional pongal ritual in which milk with rice and other such items are made to worship the Sun God. The third day is known as "Maatu Pongal". It is the day when the cattle is worshiped and decorated with bells and flowers to show gratitude to the tasks that it allows one to complete on a daily basis – for example, providing milk. The final day of the four-day festival is celebrated as "Kannum Pongal" on which special rituals are carried out by women who seek prosperity for their brother's households. It is a sign of deep love and affection for the brother. Friends and family also visit each other and deliver the made sweets and savouries as a sign of sharing their prosperity and acknowledgement of thanks. This festival is the equivalent of Thanksgiving.

Thai Pongal shows the practitioner that he/she should consistently take a step back from the actions of daily life to be grateful for the things that they have overlook. For example, the sun rising in east is considered a casual event when it occurs. However, if for whatever reason, the sun did not rise tomorrow, everyone would notice. Moreover, life wouldn't even be possible without the sun. Everything that we know and take for granted is a blessing. Moreover, there is much to learn from the Sun God. Relentlessly, the sun god partakes in his duty without fail. He does not ask for anything in return and thus is the ideal example of selfless service with a strict sense of duty. We must all learn from him on this very special occasion!



In my household, we celebrate Thai Pongal every year religiously. Mom wakes up very early to perform the rituals in front of the altar and at the stove. My father cleans the entirety of the house while my brother and I sleep. However, sleeping in is a bad habit that I would like to overcome especially on this day. I have begun to realize that being part of these procedures leading up to the rituals are also an important part of a learning experience that we must not miss out on. Every ritual that is performed, my mother is familiar with why its performed. This year I have made it a goal to wake up early with my family to partake in the festivities. I will visit my family members and relatives along with my parents. Perhaps this will give me a chance to learn more about these traditions. That being said, I am a huge fanatic of the sweets and other such pastries that families make to share with us. I always enjoy eating them to my hearts content! So this year I will also make it a priority to participate in the spiritual aspects of this day by getting involved in the rituals performed.



Makar Sankranti **Story and Morales**

Makar Sankranti is a traditional Hindu harvest festival, believed to mark the arrival of spring in India. Falling on January 14th of the Nepali calendar every year, this festival is celebrated all over India in different ways with different names.

In Nepal, this festival is similar to a solstice festival. It is believed that on this day, the sun begins its northward journey. This marks the beginning of longer days and more sunlight. Those celebrating Sankranti take ritual baths at auspicious river locations. Festive sweets and delicacies are cooked and shared with family, friends and those in the community.

In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, this festival is celebrated over four days. On the first day, people will get rid of old things and turn their focus to new beginnings and transformation. The celebration focuses on transformation and new beginnings, a resemblance throughout the different beliefs and traditions of this festival.

One of the underlying themes of this festival is gratitude. It is imperative to take time from our busy lives to be grateful for what we are provided with. From the earth we stand on, to the people around us, and the activities we are able to participate in on a daily basis; the feeling of gratefulness is constant. Each and every culture has a unique

way of celebrating and saying thanks. However, the message of gratitude is universal.

Festivals like Makar Sankranti are simply a reminder of a concept we should practice everyday. Our dear Swami says "when you retire for the night, offer grateful homage to God for being with you all day long." As such, this celebration is a great time to heighten our awareness for all we are given.



President's Message

Oh son of Kuntī [Arjuna], I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable om in the Vedic mantras; I am the sound in ether and ability in man.

Chapter 7: Knowledge of the Absolute-The Bhagavad Gita

*raso 'ham apsu kaunteya
prabhasmi sasi-suryayoh
pranavah sarva-vedesu
sabdah khe paurusam nrsu*

Lord Krishna says, raso 'ham apsu kaunteya": I am the taste in the water." This verse from the Bhagavad Gita explains how the Lord is all-pervasive by His diverse material and spiritual energies. So Let us be thankful to God for, whatever, we have received in our life from Him. Let us learn to appreciate what we have in life.

As one little girl replied when her teacher asked her what is the Seven Wonders of the World, it is to touch, to taste, to see, to hear, to feel, to laugh and to love.

In Bhagavad Gita, God too assures

*"ananyas cintayanto mam
ye.janah paryuṣasate
tesham nityabhiyuktanam
yoga-ksemam vahamy aham"*

(The Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9 verse 22)

"Sri Krishna said to Arjuna: But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I give what they lack in life, and I protect what they have."



Game Corner

WORDSEARCH

Find the following words!

CELEBRATION
FESTIVAL
PONGAL
TRANSFORMATION
COMMUNITY
GRATITUDE
SANKRANTI
FAMILY
HARVEST
THANKS

T H A N K S I Z R C F R K R C
U U B C L V T B F O T Y L A H
D M M E P G N N Q M R C F P A
V J P L B Z A P O M A W E O R
P L F E R H R E E U N U S N V
G M V B G A K V T N S R T G E
J R Y R M F N U D I F I I A S
L E A A V I A X W T O O V L T
Z I Y T T P S L D Y R F A E Y
G I L I I K F M C P M Z L P U
X Q I O I T K E P D A M F K N
M S M N T A U H I S T V C L S
W E A K C W N D J W I W P V G
L B F N L D T I E J O K V F T
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