



NEW

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Glory of Bharath » INDICA

Akshaya Trithiya



Akshaya Trithiya, also known as Akha Teej is a Hindu holy day, that falls on the third Tithi (Lunar day) of Bright Half (Shukla Paksha) of Hindu month of Vaishakha. This day is ruled by god Vishnu, the preserver-god in the Hindu Trinity. It is also traditionally celebrated as the birth day of the Hindu sage Parashurama, the sixth avatar (incarnation) of the god Vishnu. According to Hindu mythology, on this day the Treta Yuga began and the river Ganges, the most holy and sacred river of India, descended to the earth from the heaven.

The word "Akshaya" means the never diminishing in Sanskrit and the day is believed to bring good luck and success. The day is particularly considered auspicious for buying long term assets like gold and silver, including ornaments made of the same; diamond and other precious stones; and the real estate. The legend states that any venture initiated

on the auspicious day of Akshaya Trithiya shall continue to grow and bring prosperity. Hence, it is normal to see many of the new ventures, like starting a business, ground breaking for construction on the Akshaya Trithiya.

Traditions and Beliefs

The day is generally observed by fasting and worshipping Lord Vasudeva (Sri Krishna or Lord Vishnu) with rice grains. A dip in the Ganges on this day is also considered to be very auspicious. Scriptures say that knowledge gained or charity done on this day is very fruitful. It is considered to be very lucky day to start new business or venture. Many people buy gold, assets or property on this day. In some traditions a fan, rice, salt, ghee, sugar, vegetables, tamarind, fruit, clothes, are given in charity. Tulsi water considered holy and purificatory is sprinkled also in the vicinity of the idol while performing aarti. After puja, meals are allowed. Special pujas are performed by offering barley in the holy fire.

Akshaya Trithiya is a holy day for Jains as well. People who observe the year-long alternative day fasting finish their Tapsaya this day. As per Jain legends, Rishabhdev fasted and meditated for 6 months. After that he went out to collect food (asked for alms). However no one knew the procedure of offering food to a monk. Rishabhdev, therefore could not get to eat for seven months and nine days. Shreyans was the brother of King Somaprabha. Shreyans recollected from a previous 'life' how to offer food to a monk. Hence on the third day of the second half of Vaisaakh (Akshaya Trithiya) Rishabhdev got to break his fast. Rishabhdev was the first Tirthankara of Jains. It is believed that Rishabhdev invented pottery, painting, sculpture. So on this day Jains break their fast (Varsitap) by drinking sugar cane juice and visiting the main temple of Rishabhdeva in Palitana.



श्री आदिनाथ एव (वसिष्ठ)
Lord Rishabhdev

In Bengal, on the day of the Akshaya Trithiya, "HalKhata" or ceremony to start the new audit book is performed with the worship of Lord Ganesha & Devi Lakshmi. Poila Boisakh, the first day of Boisakh is considered an auspicious day to start a business as well as to perform the "HalKhata". According to the Hindu customs, many Bengalis choose to perform the same rites & rituals as Poila Baisakh on the holy day of "Akshaya Trithiya" also.

For the Jat farming community this festival is known as "Akha Teej". Early morning, a male member of Jat family goes to field with shovel. All the animals and birds encountered on the way to the field indicate omens and predictions for rains and crops.

Akshaya Trithiya is also an occasion for weddings, which are conducted in mass marriage ceremonies. Gujarat is famous for this tradition. It is considered an unboojha muhurat. For Tamilians, Thruthiyai is the third day after the New Moon. Akshayam means also "growth". In the tamil month of Chithirai, the thruthiyai which falls in the Shukla Paksham (valar pirai) is called Akshaya Thruthiyai. Thrythiyai occurs ever month, but the one in Chithirai is celebrated specially. On every thruthiyai, Chandra darsanam is considered auspicious.

The tamilian legend associated with Akshaya Trithiya is that Kuchela, the poor friend of Krishna went to see Krishna with some aval (poha) tied in his upper cloth. Kannan welcomed Kuchela happily and putting a handful of poha in his mouth uttered the word "Akshayam". At once, the humble abode of Kuchela became a palace and he became a very prosperous man. Another legend is that Sri Parasurama, the sixth avatara of Vishnu was born on this day. Many people offer tharpanams to forefathers on this day.



This is done to incur their blessings. It is very good to worship, Shiva Parvathi, Shriman Narayanan, Sri Lakshmi Devi on this day. Lakshmi is supposed to have chosen this day to worship Lord Kubera on this day, to be blessed with Kubera Sampath.

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Lord Krishna with Kuchela or Sudama

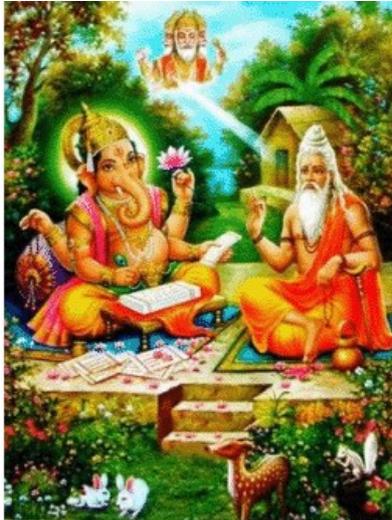
Legends

There are many legends and stories related to Akshay Tritiya. The most famous is that

according to the Vedas, it was on the day of Akshay Tritiya that Veda Vyasa along with Lord Ganesha started writing the epic, Mahabharata. It is also traditionally observed as the birthday of Sri Parshurama, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The Puranas speak about how Sri Parshurama reclaimed the land from the sea. Goa and Konkan regions, even today, are referred to as Parusurama Kshetra.



Lord Parasurama



Sage Veda Vyasa and Lord Ganesha in composing Mahabharat

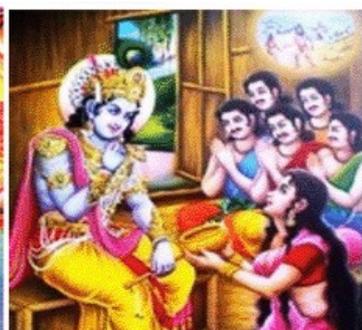
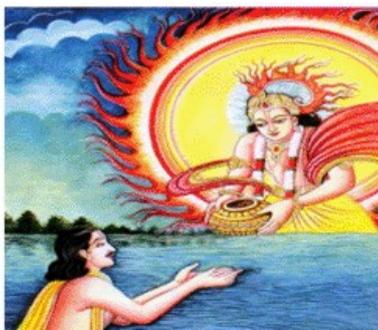
The "Puranas", holy Hindu scriptures state that when Ved Vyas Rishi requested Lord Ganesha to help him compose the Mahabharata, Lord Ganesha accepted the offer only after laying down certain terms. He said to Vyas Rishi that Sri Ganesh would write the "Slokas" of the Vedas only if Vyash Rishi would match his speed of writing. If Sri Ganesh had to stop due to Vyas Rishi, he would discontinue writing. Vyas Rishi accepted the proposal with his own conditions, stating that Lord Sri Ganesha had to comprehend the meaning of the "Shlokas" before he could write them down. Vyas Rishi then started composing the epic and used complicated language. The time Lord Sri Ganesha took to understand the meaning was enough for Vyas Rishi to compose new lines.

As legend also goes, there is a story of a brahmin who had a very good wife but was poor. Whatever little money he got would spend. He also did not have any children. As per his wife's request he went to meet Vasishtha Muni/Rishi to know the reason for his suffering. Vasishtha Muni/Rishi told him that in his previous life he was very rich and also had many children, but he was very stingy and did not spend money even for the welfare of own children. So in this birth this is the reason for his being poor and without children. The brahmin then asked Vasishtha Muni/Rishi why he has a good wife. So the Muni replied that he had observed that the vrata of Vaishaka month for the last 5 days and that gave him a good wife in this birth and also his brahmana birth. The Muni advised him to fast for at least the last 7 days left of Vaishaka month, with devotion to Lord Krishna. It is believed that since the brahmin observed the vrata of Vaishaka month as stated by the Muni and he got sons, became rich, and ultimately obtained spiritual bliss.

For vaishnavites, this day also coincides with the death anniversary of Sri Vijayadhvaja Tiirtha, in the lineage of Sri Pejawaar Mutt. He is famous for his commentary upon the Srimad Bhagavatam. He lived in the 15th century and his samadhi is in Kanva Tirtha. Vaishnavites believe that there is also a pipal tree by the side of samadhi under which he is believed to have written his commentary. During the tenure of Sri Pejawaar MaTha a special festival is arranged in Sri Krishna Mutt on this day and the akshaya paatra (vessel) given by Sri Madhva is offered a special puuja. This akshaya patra is said to have been given by the Sun god, it is the same pot that Draupadi used to cook in. It is said that from the time of turning it upwards for use on a day the pot will provide unlimited amounts of foodstuffs for the satisfaction of the Lord.

There is another legend in connection to this pot.

When the Pandavas were exiled to the forest for twelve years after a second gambling match, the Kurus stated that after the completion of twelve years the Pandavas had then to spend one year incognito, thus making thirteen years. If, during the final year the Pandavas's whereabouts were discovered, they again had to spend another twelve years in the forest. The Pandavas were concerned how to feed the 'brahmins' who accompanied them to the forest, Draupadi Devi was given a pot by the sun god called by Aksayapatra. This pot would never be empty until Draupadi had taken her meal and turned the pot upside down. Then it would produce no more for that day. Once Draupadi had finished cooking and had just taken her meal when the Muni/Rishi Durvasas arrived with many of his disciples. The angry sage Durvasas and his disciples had secretly been asked to go there by the Kauravas who knew that by this time Draupadi would have taken her meal, and if she was unable to offer them anything to eat, she would incur the wrath of Durvasa. Durvasas and his disciples went to the river to bathe and freshen up before taking their meal. Draupadi, full of anxiety, prayed to Lord Krishna to help her. Lord Sri Krishna then told Draupadi that if there was a morsel of food left he would be satisfied if that were offered by Draupadi to him. Seeing a fragment of rice stuck to the side of the pot, Sri Krishna asked for it, Draupadi offered it to Sri Krishna, and simply by eating that morsel of foodstuffs, all of Rishi Durvasas' men and Durvasa himself became completely full and satisfied, and out of embarrassment slipped away and didn't come to demand a meal from Draupadi as the Duryodhana had arranged for them to do.

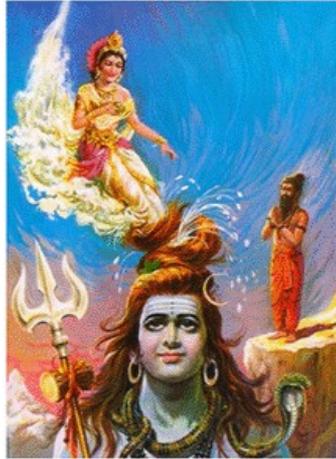




Lord Surya giving Akshayapaatra to Yudhishtira, Lord Krishna to pandavas' rescue

Akshaya Tritiya Festival is an agricultural festival celebrated in Orissa. It falls in the Akshaya Tritiya day - the third day (Tritiya) of the new moon month of Vaisakha (April-May). The ceremonial sowing of paddy in the field is the main characteristic of this festival. Akshaya Tritiya Festival is organized in every farming household. After taking an early day bath, the farmers wear new cloths and carry the seeds in new baskets. After making offerings to Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, the seeds are sown ceremonially praying for a bumper crop. In the evening strictly vegetarian feasts are arranged in the respective homes. The festival is called 'Muthi Chhuan' in western Orissa, during which eating of green-leaves ('Shag') is forbidden for a day. The famous Chandan Yatra of Lord Jagannath also starts in this day.

Akshaya Tritiya is regarded auspicious for starting new ventures and making new purchases. All over India, people celebrate weddings, start new business ventures and making new purchases on this day.



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