

Mahakumbh

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Abstract

The concept of Mahakumbh represents a significant cultural and spiritual gathering that transcends religious and social divides. It emphasizes the dynamic nature of knowledge and spiritual growth, advocating for the unity of human beings regardless of their individual identities. Drawing parallels with Newton's law of inertia, the article highlights how stagnation in knowledge and belief systems leads to fanaticism and superstition, while a continuous engagement with traditions through modern perspectives ensures spiritual and intellectual relevance. The Mahakumbh, organized at the confluence of sacred rivers, symbolizes the purification of both body and soul. The mythological significance of the Kumbh as a vessel for nectar is linked to the metaphorical cleansing of human beings, removing the impurities caused by desires, anger, and greed. This gathering fosters unity, transcending caste, religion, and other divisions, encouraging a collective spirit of renunciation, knowledge, and devotion. It promotes the idea that true spirituality is not about personal pride or differences but about universal unity and self-reflection. The Mahakumbh serves as a living example of the eternal quest for truth, offering a platform for spiritual renewal and connection to the divine.

Keywords: Mahakumbh, Unity, Spiritual Purification, Devotion, Cultural Integration

Introduction

The Significance of Mahakumbh in Indian Culture

Indian scholars have given the highest place to knowledge and light, but in the constantly changing times and circumstances, knowledge does not remain relevant. Inertia sets in. According to Newton's law of inertia, this tendency to resist change in the state of motion is inertia. Every object will remain stationary or in uniform motion in a straight line, unless it is forced to change its position by the action of an external force. Inertia gives rise to fanaticism, bigotry and superstition. Even stagnant water starts to rot. Just as a river remains dynamic by remaining connected to its source and removes its dirt, similarly we also purify ourselves by remaining connected to traditions with a modern vision.

Indian culture has maintained the tradition of regular Ardh Kumbh, Kumbh and Maha Kumbh fairs for the dynamism and relevance of knowledge. This is the 'external force' of that rule. The historical origin of these fairs lies in the institution of scholarly Sannyasis established by the greatest philosopher Adi Shankar, which was regularly formed to discuss and debate various principles. After these were discussed, the accepted principles were accepted by all sects. Knowledge, devotion and renunciation should not be the right of any particular class and it should be easily available to everyone, hence these fairs are organized on the banks of the Sangam at a public place, where any person can stay and take advantage of the knowledge assembly.

The meaning of Sangam itself is confluence. Just as even after their differences, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati become one and benefit the bathers, similarly even after their cultural and individual differences, every human being is spiritually one. According to

Rigveda mantra 10/191/3, "Sangachchadhvam samvadadhvam sam vo manansi jaanataam. Deva bhagam yatha poorve sanjaanana upasate." Let us all walk together, speak together, let our minds be one, just as the scholars/gods of the past used to be one for their appointed work, similarly we should also keep meeting together. Everyone's welfare lies in being united. When we sit in our hut with our knowledge, then the practical utility of knowledge is not proved. Therefore, like Jagadguru Shri Krishna, one has to descend into the Kurukshetra of the battle of life with knowledge. The spirituality that cannot solve every problem of human beings is nothing more than futile airy thinking.

The Historical and Cultural Roots of Mahakumbh

In Mahakumbh, the meaning of Kumbh is Kalash or pot. This Kalash is a symbol of our body. The great disciple of Saint Ramanand has also used this metaphor for the body: Jal mein Kumbh Kumbh mein jal hai, bahar bhitari paani. Foota Kumbh jal jal hi samaya, yah tath kahyo gyani. Due to being controlled by desire, anger and greed, defects and demerits like poison keep filling in this Kumbh. According to mythological beliefs, some drops of nectar had fallen in the Sangam. By bathing in the Mahakumbh, physical impurities are removed, mental purification takes place due to the nectar-like words of various saints and their association. In this way, our Kumbh or body is filled with nectar again. It is necessary to 'jas ki tas dhar dinhi chadariya' to clean the dust accumulating on the soul and this is the purpose of Mahakumbh.

On the living canvas of Mahakumbh, pictures of the eternal search for truth are carved with human colors of traditional music, philosophy, religion, joy, rituals, prayers, donations etc. The feeling of 'I am

something' of crores of people who come across geographical, individual, religious, linguistic and cultural boundaries dissolves in Mahakumbh. Whether I am something or whether the viewer establishes harmony with a scene, this is what Maharishi Patanjali has called 'Asmita' in his Yoga Darshan. Due to this Klesha, instead of considering ourselves as pure souls or human beings, we have considered ourselves to belong to a particular caste or religion or body or gender or language or nation or ideology. In this way, considering ourselves special and different from others, we started hating or loving them. The only way to remove such Kleshas is : Kriyayoga i.e. the trinity of austerity, self-study and Ishwar Pranidhan. This Kriyayoga is easily found on the trinity of holy rivers. In the Mahakumbh, one does not even realize that one is something among crores of people.

Mahakumbh is the center of unity of various streams of humanity, which we call Sanatan Dharma. Among the Akharas divided into different opinions and deities, there is also the Udaseen Akhara of Chandradevji, son of Guru Nanak Devji. This fact announces the unity of all religions and sects flourishing on the land of India. Caste, Varna, class and religious neglect are washed away in the holy stream of Sangam. A stream of three rivers flows through dozens of ghats and crores of human beings of hundreds of

castes bathe in it leaving their ego. In the eternal flow of existence, the lively festival of Mahakumbh inspires us to renounce stubbornness, inertia and narrow-mindedness and take the immortality of knowledge-devotion-renunciation. This nectar gives us the necessary energy and power to defeat the Asura forces in the ever-going Devasur Sangram. Mahakumbh gives us an opportunity for self-reflection. We are all one and Mahakumbh is its living document.

Conclusion

The Mahakumbh, with its vast spiritual significance, is more than just a religious gathering; it is a powerful reminder of the unity of humanity. The confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati serves as a metaphor for the convergence of different beliefs and identities into a harmonious whole. Through the symbolic cleansing of the Kumbh, individuals are encouraged to reflect on their inner selves, overcome the ego, and embrace the shared spiritual essence that unites all beings. The Mahakumbh exemplifies the timeless relevance of knowledge, devotion, and renunciation, offering a space for personal transformation and collective harmony. By fostering spiritual growth and unity, the Mahakumbh continues to inspire individuals to break free from narrow divisions and walk together on the path of enlightenment.
