Dashain

A Long Time Ago... Once upon a time in the beautiful land of Nepal, nestled among tall mountains and green valleys, there lived a kind and brave prince named Ram. He was no ordinary prince—he was chosen by the gods to bring peace to the world. But peace could not come until Ram defeated the most terrible demon of all: the ten-headed Ravana, who ruled the kingdom of evil with his magic and power. The Trouble Begins Ravana was not just strong but very clever too. He had kidnapped Sita, Ram's beloved wife, and hidden her in his dark, spooky palace far away in the kingdom of Lanka. Ram knew he had to save Sita, but Ravana had an army of demons and dark powers protecting him. But Ram was not alone! His loyal brother Lakshman and the magical monkey warrior Hanuman promised to help him. Hanuman was so strong and smart that he could leap across oceans and carry mountains in his hands. Together, they formed a great army of humans and animals to fight against Ravana. The Big Battle For ten days, the battle raged on. Swords clashed, arrows flew, and the sky was filled with thunder and fire. Ravana kept using his powers to confuse and scare Ram's army, but Ram had the greatest weapon of all: truth and courage. On the tenth day, with the blessings of the gods, Ram aimed his golden arrow at Ravana’s heart. The arrow flew like a shooting star and struck Ravana, ending his reign of terror forever. The whole world rejoiced because goodness had finally triumphed over evil. Celebrating Dashain The victory of Ram over Ravana became a reason for celebration across Nepal. People named it Dashain, a time to honor the victory of good over evil. In Dashain, we also remember another brave story of Goddess Durga, who defeated the fierce demon Mahishasura with her divine powers. Both stories teach us that no matter how powerful evil seems, it will always be defeated by truth and bravery. Dashain Traditions Now, every year during Dashain, families in Nepal celebrate these victories with joy and love. Here’s how: 1. Flying Kites: During Dashain, children like you fly kites to tell the gods that the rainy season is over and the skies are clear again. 2. Tika and Jamara: Elders put red tika on the foreheads of younger family members and bless them for a happy and successful life. The tika is like a magical mark of protection and love. Along with it, they place green jamara (barley grass), which symbolizes prosperity. 3. Swinging on Bamboo Swings: Villages and towns build big bamboo swings called ping. Children swing high into the sky, laughing and feeling free, as a way to say thank you to the gods. 4. Feasting: Delicious food like rice, meat curries, and sweets are cooked. Families gather around to share meals, tell stories, and have fun. 5. Worshipping the Goddess Durga: Beautiful statues of Goddess Durga are made, and people offer flowers, fruits, and prayers to thank her for protecting the world from evil. A Lesson for All Dashain is not just about fun and feasting; it reminds us to always: - Be kind like Ram. - Be brave like Durga. - Help others like Hanuman. - And believe that no matter how hard things get, goodness will always win in the end. And so, every Dashain, when you fly a kite, swing on a bamboo ping, or receive tika from your elders, remember this magical story of courage and love. It’s a story that makes Nepal special, just like you! The End.

#### **Dashain Traditions**

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3. **Swinging on Bamboo Swings**: Villages and towns build big bamboo swings called **ping**. Children swing high into the sky, laughing and feeling free, as a way to say thank you to the gods.
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#### **A Lesson for All**

Dashain is not just about fun and feasting; it reminds us to always:

* Be kind like Ram.
* Be brave like Durga.
* Help others like Hanuman.
* And believe that no matter how hard things get, goodness will always win in the end.

Tihar:

### **The Story of Tihar: A Festival of Love and Lights**

#### **Day 1: The Crow’s Message (Kaag Tihar)**

A long, long time ago, there was a clever crow named **Kalu**. He loved watching over the villagers, and whenever danger was near, he would caw loudly to warn them. One day, a big storm was coming, and Kalu flew around the village, shouting, "Caw! Caw! Protect your crops! A storm is coming!"

The villagers listened to Kalu, saved their crops, and were very thankful. From that day on, people began to feed crows during **Kaag Tihar** to thank them for being the messengers of the gods.

#### **Day 2: The Loyal Dog (Kukur Tihar)**

Once, a kind farmer had a dog named **Bhim**. Bhim loved his family and kept them safe from danger. One night, thieves tried to enter the house, but Bhim barked so loudly that the thieves ran away.

Everyone praised Bhim for his bravery and decided to honor all dogs for their loyalty. During **Kukur Tihar**, people give garlands, tika, and delicious treats to dogs, saying, "Thank you for being our best friends!"

#### **Day 3: The Magical Cow and Goddess Laxmi (Gai Tihar)**

A gentle cow named **Surabhi** lived in a small village. Surabhi gave milk to hungry children and brought happiness to everyone. The villagers loved her so much that they decided to treat cows like queens!

On this day, people also worship **Goddess Laxmi**, the goddess of wealth and good fortune. They light oil lamps and decorate their homes with colorful rangoli to welcome her, hoping she’ll bless them with happiness.

#### **Day 4: The Mountain and New Beginnings (Gobardhan Puja)**

Long ago, Lord Krishna lifted a huge mountain called **Gobardhan** to protect the villagers from a terrible storm. He held the mountain like an umbrella, and everyone stayed safe beneath it.

To remember this story, people make tiny mountains from cow dung, decorate them, and pray for protection.

For the Newars, this day is also **Mha Puja**, a time to honor themselves! Families celebrate good health, happiness, and new beginnings.

#### **Day 5: The Sister’s Love (Bhai Tika)**

Once, a brave sister named **Yamuna** saved her brother from Yama Raja, the god of death. She placed colorful tika on her brother's forehead, gave him delicious food, and prayed for his long life.

Yama Raja was so touched by her love that he said, "From now on, no brother who is loved by his sister will face harm."

Now, during **Bhai Tika**, sisters put tika on their brothers and pray for their happiness. Brothers promise to protect their sisters and give them gifts.

#### **The Lights of Tihar**

Tihar is called the **Festival of Lights** because every home glows with oil lamps and candles. Children make rangoli patterns with bright colors, families sing and dance, and everyone eats sweets like sel roti and ladoo.

#### **What Tihar Teaches Us**

Tihar is more than just fun and lights. It teaches us:

* To care for animals like crows, dogs, and cows.
* To love and protect our families.
* To work hard and welcome happiness into our lives.

So, every year during Tihar, remember these magical stories and spread love and kindness all around you.