



## S.K.S. SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE (LONDON) – BAL YUVAK MANDAL

Westfield Lane, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9EA Est. 1966 Charity Reg. No. 271034

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### Shikshapatri Bhashya Shlok 79

***My devotees shall earnestly observe fast on all the EKADASHI days (the eleventh day of every lunar half month), JANMASHTAMI (birthday of Shree Krishna) and Shivratri. They shall also celebrate these days with great festivity***

- Ekadashi is a Sanskrit word. Eka = 1 and Dashi = 10 (1+10) = 11.
- Ekadashi comes once every fortnight.
- Swaminarayan Bhagwan explains in the Vachanamrut that a true Ekadashi Vrat is when one withdraws the ten indriyas (5 Sense organs: Eyes, Ears, Nose, Skin, Tongue and 5 Motor organs: Hands, Feet, Mouth, Reproductive Organs, Excretory Organs) and the eleventh, the mind, from their worldly activities and focuses them on God and devotional activities.

All persons male and female, married and widows, Grahastha and Brahamchari, Vanprashti and Sanyasi-over the age of 8 and under the age of 80 must observe the vrats of Ekadashi faithfully by undergoing of fast. The widows need to be extra careful as all their punyas are nullified by eating on the day of Ekadashi. The greatness of the Ekadashi is immense in terms of measuring the value of keeping the Vrats on these days.

The following are some of the examples of vrats that are observed on Ekadashi:-

- Upvaas
- Perform Maha Pooja of Bhagwan
- To do Jagran (e.g. Bhajan/Bhakti)
- Read Shastras.

Benefits of fasting and observing the vrats are as follows:-

- Controlling the mind (keeping focused on bhagwan's murti)
- Controlling the body (gives a break to your digestive system which science approves)
- Gain Maharaj's happiness
- **Discuss other ways of controlling the mind and body.**

One who eats grains on Ekadashi is considered as consuming sins and according to the scriptures, he is considered the killer of a Brahmin, mother, father and guru. The scriptures also state the atonement (prayaschit) of a major sin like Brahmhatya but no scripture ever mentions atonement of eating on Ekadashi (non farari food).

### **ORIGIN OF EKADASHI**

The story of Ekadashi is explained in the third prakaran of the Satsangi Jeevan. In Satyug there was a demon called Naadijand who had a son called Murdanav. After intense tapasya, Pleased with Mardanav's tapasya, Brahma told him to ask for a boon. The boon was that he wouldn't die even from the deities.



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Lord Narayan was resting, by drawing inward his ten Indriyas and the mind. Murdanav came to where he was resting, and challenged the Lord to enter into combat with him. In the meantime, a beautiful young lady evolved from the light of the Ekadash (11) Indriyas of Lord Narayan.

Seeing the charms of the young lady, Murdanav was drawn to her and proposed to her. With a hasty gesture, the young lady said 'I have taken a vow that whosoever shall defeat me in straight fight shall marry me.' Without thinking twice about the vow Murdanav accepted the challenge and entered into a fight with her. The young lady killed the demon with a dagger.

Lord Narayan, pleased with the destruction by the young lady, told her to ask for a boon. The young lady then said, 'Since I have evolved out of your Ekadash Indriyas, my name is Ekadashi. I am wedded to Tapa. I therefore desire that everyone should observe the Ekadashi Vrata and should restrain their Ekadash Indriyas from indulging in their respective sense objects. Hearing the words of the young lady, Lord Narayan suggested that she does not need her sword anymore.'

Ekadashi proposed that she would use her sword to cut sins of Satsangis who observe the Ekadashi Vrata. Lord Narayan agreed and offered her to reside in his eyes (Netras). This is the story of Ekadashi Vrata narrated in the Purana.

In the same way vrats should be observed during Janmashtmi, Ramnavmi, Shivratri, Nrusih Jayanti and Vaman Jayanti and are to be celebrated in great festivity with musical instruments and songs in honour of Lord Shree Krishna. Apart from the 24 Ekadashi, these are the five extra vrats which are to be observed in a year. Anyone who fasts on these 29 days of the year is known to be Vaishnavs.

Ekadashi fasting in order of Merit:-

- No food or water
- No food but water only
- No food but milk only once a day
- Fruit once in a day
- Farari Food (e.g. Rajgaro, Samo, Potatoes, Cassava, Milk products), **Only once a day and HOME COOKED!!**

### Shikshapatri Bhashya Shlok 80

***On the day of fast, one shall avoid day time sleep and shall make deliberate effort, because of day sleep fast is destroyed, just as through sexual indulgence***

Sleeping during the daytime breaks the fast because a person cannot control the mind when a sleep. The idea of fasting is to control your mind and give your body a rest.

Maharaj has advised that one should not waste time sleeping during the day, when they could be using that time to do bhajan bhakti, which will help them get closer to attaining Moksha.