



**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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## CHATURMAAS

### Padma Ekadashi (Devshyani Ekadashi)

Chaturmaas starts on Ashadh Sud Ekadashi (July 7<sup>th</sup> 2006). It is the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the bright half in the month of Ashadh and this day is known as “Padma Ekadashi” or “Devshyani Ekadashi” (commonly referred to as the Neem Ekadashi). Chaturmaas begins on this day very day and ends on Prabhodhini Ekadashi in the month of Kartik. “**Chatur**” meaning four and “**Maas**” means months, thus it is a period of four auspicious (blessed) months, namely:-

- Ashadh - July ,
- Shravan - August,
- Bhadarvo - September and
- Aaso - October

### The importance of Chaturmaas

- According to the Purans, from this day onwards Lord Vishnu takes rest in Kshir Sagar (ocean of milk) instead of Vaikut.
- It is said that when a devotee observes severe austerities and penance (self-punishment) related with God during they will become free from all sins and achieves indescribable merits.
- Lord Swaminarayan also meditated in Pulahaashram during the Chaturmaas, hence it bears more value and we should all carry our some sort of penance as well.

One should observe self-control, self-discipline and observe extra penance, devotion and avoid indulging in any sensual pleasures during this period of four months.

### How to take the Niyams

On the day of Dev Shayani Ekadashi one should stand in front on the God with two hands together and say a prayer asking him to give you strength and courage to help get through the four months of austerities and help you observe the niyams you have vowed to take.

On Kartik Sud Prabhodhini Ekadashi, the Chaturmaas period ends. On this day, those who had taken niyams should stand in front of the God and say a prayer to awake the Lord and do his puja. Thereafter, ask the Lord to accept the penance and ask for forgiveness in case any mistake was made while observing the niyams.

*“Some devotees observe a fast during these 4 months: however those who cannot observe a proper fast can consume cow’s milk, water and fruits because they are considered not to break vrats.”*



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### Fruits of doing Chartumaas

The special observances for Chaturmaas should be practiced with maximum devotion to God. These practices must not be undertaken to expect fruits of any kind but only for the pleasure of the Lord Swaminarayan. In Satsangi Jeevan Lord Swaminarayan has said that one who observes niyams during the period of Chaturmaas will attain Kirti they will also be attaining bliss during this birth and also when they go to Akshardham.

### **References**

Several religious books have information on how to observe the period of Chaturmaas in the correct way i.e. one approved by Lord Swaminarayan.

Lord Swaminarayan has written in the Shikshapatri:-

**“Shikshapatri Sholka 76”**

“all my disciplines shall undertake special additional religious duties during the four months of monsoon. Those who are weak and incapable shall perform them at least during the month of Shravan. “

**Shikshapatri Sholka 77”**

The following are the best methods of observance of additional religious duties that can be adopted and followed:-

1. Reading religious scriptures eg. Vachnamrut & Satsangi Jeevan
2. Listening to religious scriptures
3. Singing devotional songs (kirtans) in praise of Bhagwan
4. Performing Mahapuja
5. Chanting the Swaminarayan Maha Mantra (eg do extra Malas everyday)
6. Reciting Bhagwan’s hymns
7. Performing certain number of Pradikshanas (Walking around the image of God in a clockwise direction)
8. Full physical prostration before the Lords image by touching eight limbs to the ground. (Sashtang Dandvat Pranam)

These eight are the best type of practice. Along with the observances of daily religious austerities, my disciples shall choose any one of the above methods as additional devotion practice during Chaturmaas and follow it daily with deep devotion.

Also vegetables like bringals, radish and fruits like watermelons and sugarcane should not be consumed. The reason for these restrictions are due to the fact that these categories of food and other products are newly grown during the monsoon season, hence it should not be eaten but saved for Lord Swaminarayan.