

What prayers can be performed on Ekadashi?



Prem Namaste, Vanakum, Hare Krsna, Jai Shree Krsna, Jai Shree Raam
All glories to our eternal Parents Shree Shree Radha Krsna
All glories to the most merciful Shree Shree Lakshmi Nrsimhadeva
All glories to Srila Prabhupada, and the other wonderful and inspiring gurus.
All glories to the wonderful servants of the Supreme Lord.

I have received many emails requesting me to compile an article on Ekadashi and its influence and importance with regards to Weddings, Katha and Jhanda, Durga Path, General Pujas, Deaths, Funerals and the like. We hope that this article will provide clarity with regards to this important yet seemed to be forgotten Fasting day which until now was quite largely unheard of amongst us Hindu's.

Ekadashi, for those who don't know is a Sanskrit word, which means 'the eleventh day'. Ekadashi occurs twice in a month, on the 11th day of the bright and dark fortnight. The special feature of Ekadashi is a fast that one abstains from grains, meat, alcohol, shaving and cutting one's nails.

In the Caitanya-caritamrita (Adi-lila, chapter 15 verses 8-10), states "One day Shree Caitanya Mahaprabhu fell down at the feet of His mother and requested her to give Him one thing in charity. His mother replied, "My dear son, I will give You whatever You ask." Then the Lord said, "My dear mother, please do not eat grains on the Ekadashi day." Mother Sachi said, "You have spoken very nicely. I shall not eat grains on Ekadashi." From that day, she began to observe fasting on Ekadashi."

And in the purport to these verses Srila Prabhupada explains that even though devotees eat food cooked for and offered to Lord Vishnu, prasada, which is spiritually potent and free from all karma, even on Ekadashi a devotee does not eat even mahaprasada that has grains in it. It can be saved for the next day. When I read the above verses many, many years back when I first started studying our sastras I was really taken aback by these verses. It did make such a profound impact on me that I made it my life's ambition to make people aware of this most holy of days... If one calls him/herself a Hindu then they must observe Ekadashi. Today by the kindest mercy of Srimati Ekadashi Devi Herself many many people that are not even Hindu's are observing this most holy of days.

Asta varsadhiko martyo apurna asiti vatsarah
Ekadasyam upavaset paksayor ubhayor api.
“From the age of eight to the age of eighty, a person
should fast on all of the Ekadashi's on both
the light and the dark parts of the month”.
(Hari Bhakti Vilasa 12/75 from Katyayana smriti)

Lord Krishna says that if a person fasts on Ekadashi, “I will burn up all his sins. Indeed this day is the most meritorious day for destroying all kinds of sins.” Ekadashi was created as the Supreme Medicine to remove the disease of the material world of having a miserable material body and mind that is full of suffering.

We take on sins (and even more obstacles in one's life) on this day if we consume grains since **PAAP PURUSHA** (sin personified) resides only in grains on this day. Also grains eaten on this day becomes harmful and remains undigested and turns toxic in the body-giving rise to various diseases and ailments. If any part of the body is overworked (generally the stomach is the most overworked organ), there will be dislocation of the working of the body. So, in fasting (like on Ekadashi) the energy is equally distributed, as the digestive function is not there. But, there should be no overdoing in fasting. Fasting is supposed to cause buoyancy of feeling and not fatigue. So people who are sick and cannot observe a total fast can take milk, fruits, water, fruit juices and vegetables. People, who are perfectly healthy and are confident, observe a complete fast. This helps in control of mind and will.

What many don't know is that Ekadashi is not just a Hindu fast but a fast that should be observed by all humanity. Srila Prabhupad mentioned that if a nation observes this fasting day then it can have so many health, psychological and other types of benefits. One should know that this fast is also observed by the Devas like Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma, Lord Indra and Devi's like Mother Durga, Mother Sarasvati and Mother Lakshmi and the rest of the Deva's and Devi's. This is what I have just stated is an important piece of information because this will be used again and again below.

In any puja one performs one must invoke Lord Ganesh, Mother Gauri and the Navagrahas (9 planets). Now in the 16 items one offers to the invoked Deities is

Naivedyam... Naivedyam is Sweet Rice, or yogurt mixed with sugar, or any sweet dish... Now this is where the problem arises because we are not supposed to offer sweet rice to the above Deities since they themselves are observing this very important fast.

Now I will be elaborating in detail on the different prayers that can and cannot be performed on Ekadashi...

In 2000 the late Pt H.R. Maharaj (my late Shiksha Guru) from the SLNT released a brilliant article called "Shraddha" and in that article Guruji states that "The final rites after Death are called Antyesti. The ceremonies performed after the 10th, 13th day followed by the monthly observances until the yearly ceremony are called Shraddha."

Question:- Can a funeral be performed on Ekadashi?

Answer:- Absolutely NOT!!! Any shraddha Puja (i.e. a funeral, the 10th day puja, the 12/13th puja, the 6th and the 11 and 1/2 month pujas should NEVER be performed on this most holy of days. Srila Jiva Goswami has given quotations from many shastras stating that the shraddha ceremony of oblations to the ancestors should not be performed on Ekadashi Tithi (day). When the Tithi of the death anniversary falls on Ekadashi day, the shraddha ceremony should be held not on Ekadashi but on the next day, or Dvadashi. In the Brahma-Vaivarta Purana this is stated: -

Ye kurvanti maheepaala
shraaddham caikaadashee-dine
trayas te narakam yaanti
daataa bhoktaa ca prerakah

"If one performs the shraddha ceremony of oblations to the forefathers on the Ekadashi tithi, then the performer, the forefathers for whom the shraddha is observed, and the purohita, or the family priest who encourages the ceremony, all go to hell." Srimad Bhagavatam 7.14.23 Purport...

There are very grave consequences for those who perform shraddha puja on Ekadashi.

Question:- Can one perform weddings on Ekadashi?

Answer:- Yes this is fine as long as one offers Lord Ganesh, Mother Gauri, the Navagrahas (planets) non grain food. With regards to Lord Vishnu we offer grains since we are fasting for Him. But the real problem arises what food to prepare for the invited guests, since the staple food for most Indian weddings is Biryani, Dhal, Salad and Suji (pudding). Now remember if you perform the wedding on Ekadashi you MUST cook Ekadashi (non-grain) food even for the guests... It just don't work that the groom and bride has Ekadashi food but the invited guests has grain food. I would STRONGLY advise this as this will be a very inauspicious start to one's married life.

Question:- Can one perform a Katha and Jhunda Prayer on Ekadashi?

Answer:- In a Jhunda puja one hoists a Jhanda (Flag) to Shree Hanumanji. Now we know that one traditionally offers to Shree Hanumanji Rhot and Panjari... These two items consists of grains. As I mentioned above that even Shree Hanumanji observes the Ekadashi fast, so to offer grains to Shree Hanumanji, do you really think Hanumanji

will accept that food? Of course not... So I would strongly advise one to perform one's Katha and Jhanda on a day that's does not fall on Ekadashi. And when one performs the puja one generally invites family members and friends... Then it means you must cook Ekadashi (non-grain) food for them as well...

Question:- Can one perform a havan on Ekadashi?

Answer:- Yes as long as the food that is offered to Shree Ganesh-Gauri is non grain foods. The grains that are offered into the fire are ultimately for Shree Vishnu.

Question:- Can one perform a Hurdi/Nelengu on Ekadashi?

Answer:- Firstly one should plan one's wedding carefully because if the Hurdi/Nelengu is done on Ekadashi others issues come up like the food you are going to cook for the guests has to be Ekadashi (non-grain) food. As well as the turmeric (hurdi) must be whole turmeric ground to a paste... One cannot use shop turmeric because that has flour (which is grain) in it. Also mustard oil is used but on Ekadashi one cannot use this...

Question:- Can one perform a Durga Path puja on Ekadashi?

Answer:- I would advise against performing one's Durga Paath on Ekadashi as one offers to Ma Durga Halwa, puri, boiled channa, sweet rice etc. This is grains and as I has stated above that Mother Durga herself fasts on this most holy of days.

Additional information:-

* During Pitar Paksha, Ekadashi is 4 days before new moon (Amavasya). On this day one should not offer any grains to one's ancestors. One should offer Ekadashi (non-grain food) on this day. In 2017 Pitar Paksha Ekadashi falls on 16th September.*

* Navaratri... With regards to Navaratri it's fine as Navaratri falls immediately after Pitr Paksha for nine days. Ekadashi is observed two days after Navaratri ends...*

I have listed the Ekadashi days for 2017 as a guide... Plz when choosing a day for your Katha and Jhunda, Shraddha Puja, or Wedding and so forth make sure you try to perform it on a Non-Ekadashi day just avoid any issues...

***** Ekadashi dates in 2017 *****

(Durban, Jhb, and Cape Town)

DO NOTE:- All times indicated below, associated with the start or end of a particular Ekadashi day are in 24-hour format.

Many have requested Cape Town Ekadashi dates for 2017 so this is provided below.

Do note that Cape Town dates dues to its locality is quite different from Durban and Jhb.

Most 2017 Hindu calenders state the following dates as Ekadashi. We don't refute these dates. It is just it's not recommended (according to the Hari Bhakti Vilas and the Skanda Purana) to fast on a day when it's not a pure Ekadashi. Ekadashi is observed on the following day. Please read all about Ashuddha and Shuddha Ekadashi on pages 4 and 5 on this article.

The following dates are Ashuddha Ekadashi in 2017... * 8th January
* 6th April
* 4th June
* 17th August
* 1st September
* 29th November

January 9th (Monday) Fasting for Putrada Ekadashi.

***** 10th January Break fast @ 05h05 – 09h44 (Durban),
@ 05h25 – 09h58 (Jhb)
@ 05h46 – 10h31 (Cape Town)

(Do note, Hindu calenders state that the 8th January as Ekadashi but it's *** Ashuddha Ekadashi (not pure), hence Putrada Ekadashi is observed on the next day the 9th)

*** Please read all about Ashuddha and Shuddha Ekadashi on page 5 on this article.

January 23rd (Monday) Fasting for Sat-tila Ekadashi.

***** 24th January Break fast @ 05h17 – 09h51 (Durban)
@ 05h36 – 10h05 (Jhb)
@ 05h59 – 10h38 (Cape Town)

February 7th (Tuesday) Fasting for Bhaimi Ekadashi.

***** 8th February Break fast @ 05h30 – 07h59 (Durban)
@ 05h47 – 07h59 (Jhb)
@ 06h14 – 07h59 (Cape Town)

February 22nd (Wednesday) Fasting for Vijaya Ekadashi.

***** 23rd February Break fast @ 05h42 – 10h00 (Durban)
@ 05h57 – 10h13 (Jhb)
@ 06h28 – 10h49 (Cape Town)

March 8th (Wednesday) Fasting for Amalaki Vrata Ekadashi.

***** 9th March Break fast @ 05h52 – 10h01 (Durban)
@ 06h05 – 10h14 (Jhb)
@ 06h40 – 10h51 (Cape Town)

March 24th (Friday) Fasting for Paapamochanee Ekadashi.

***** 25th March Break fast @ 06h02 – 10h01 (Durban)
@ 06h13 – 10h03 (Jhb)
@ 06h53 – 10h03 (Cape Town)

April 7th (Friday) Fasting for Kamada Ekadashi. (Maha Dwadashi)

***** 8th April Break fast @ 06h10 – 10h01 (Durban)
@ 06h20 – 10h13 (Jhb)
@ 07h03 – 10h53 (Cape Town)

(Do note, Hindu calenders state that the 6th April as Ekadashi but it's *** Ashuddha Ekadashi (not pure), hence Kamada Ekadashi is observed on the next day the 7th)

*** Please read all about Ashuddha and Shuddha Ekadashi on page 5 on this article.

April 22nd (Saturday) Fasting for Varuthini Ekadashi.

***** 23th April Break fast @ 06h19 – 10h02 (Durban)
@ 06h27 – 10h13 (Jhb)
@ 07h15 – 10h54 (Cape Town).

May 6th (Saturday) Fasting for Mohini Ekadashi.

***** 7th May Break fast @ 06h28 – 10h04 (Durban)
@ 06h34 – 10h14 (Jhb)
@ 07h25 – 10h57 (Cape Town)

May 22nd (Monday) Fasting for Aparajita Ekadashi.

***** 23rd May Break fast @ 06h38 – 08h33 (Durban)
@ 06h43 – 08h33 (Jhb)
@ 07h37 – 08h33 (Cape Town)

June 5th (Monday) Fasting for Pandava Nirjala Maha Ekadashi.

***** 6th June Break fast @ 06h45 – 08h12 (Durban)
@ 06h49 – 08h12 (Jhb)
@ 07h45 – 08h12 (Cape Town)

(Do note, Hindu calendars state that the 4th June is Ekadashi but it's *** Ashuddha Ekadashi (not pure), hence Pandava Nirjala Maha Ekadashi is observed on the next day the 5th). *** Please read all about Ashuddha and Shuddha Ekadashi on page 5 of this article.

June 20th (Tuesday) Fasting for Yogini Ekadashi.

***** 21st June Break fast @ 06h51 – 10h15 (Durban)
@ 06h54 – 10h24 (Jhb)
@ 07h51 – 11h09 (Cape Town)

July 4th (Tuesday) Fasting for Sayana Ekadashi.

***** 5th July Break fast @ 06h51 – 10h17 (Durban)
@ 06h55 – 10h27 (Jhb)
@ 07h51 – 11h11 (Cape Town)

July 19th (Wednesday) Fasting for Kamika Ekadashi.

***** 20th July Break fast @ 06h47 – 10h17 (Durban)
@ 06h52 – 10h27 (Jhb)
@ 07h46 – 11h10 (Cape Town)

August 3rd (Thursday) Fasting for Pavitropana Ekadashi.

***** 4th August Break fast @ 06h38 – 10h14 (Durban)
@ 06h45 – 10h24 (Jhb)
@ 07h36 – 11h07 (Cape Town)

August 18th (Friday) Fasting for Annada Ekadashi.

***** 19th August Break fast @ 06h25 – 10h08 (Durban)
@ 06h33 – 10h18 (Jhb).
@ 07h20 – 11h00 (Cape Town)

(Do note, Hindu calenders state that the 17th August as Ekadashi but it's *** Ashuddha Ekadashi (not pure), hence Annada Ekadashi is observed on the next day the 18th)
*** Please read all about Ashuddha and Shuddha Ekadashi on page 5 on this article.

September 2nd (Saturday) Fasting for Parsva Ekadashi.

***** 3rd September Break fast @ 06h08 – 07h42 (Durban)
@ 06h18 – 07h42 (Jhb)
@ 07h01 – 07h42 (Cape Town)

(Do note, Hindu calenders state that the 1st September as Ekadashi but it's *** Ashuddha Ekadashi (not pure), hence Parsva Ekadashi is observed on the next day the 2nd)
*** Please read all about Ashuddha and Shuddha Ekadashi on page 5 on this article.

September 16th (Saturday) Fasting for Indira Ekadashi.

***** 17th September Break fast @ 05h51 – 09h50 (Durban)
@ 06h02 – 10h02 (Jhb)
@ 06h42 – 10h41 (Cape Town)

October 1st (Sunday) Fasting for Pasankusa Ekadashi.

***** 2nd October Break fast @ 05h33 – 09h41 (Durban)
@ 05h46 – 09h53 (Jhb)
@ 06h21 – 10h31 (Cape Town)

October 15th (Sunday) Fasting for Rama Ekadashi.

***** 16th October Break fast @ 05h16 – 09h33 (Durban)
@ 05h31 – 09h46 (Jhb)
@ 06h03 – 10h22 (Cape Town)

October 31th (Tuesday) Fasting for Utthana Ekadashi. (Maha-dvadashi Trisprsa)

***** 1st November Break fast @ 05h01 – 09h26 (Durban)
@ 05h18 – 09h40 (Jhb)
@ 05h45 – 10h15 (Cape Town)

November 14th (Tuesday) Fasting for Utpanna Ekadashi. (Vyanjuli Maha-dvadashi)

***** 15th November Break fast @ 04h51 – 09h24 (Durban)
@ 05h10 – 09h38 (Jhb)
@ 05h34 – 09h40 (Cape Town)

November 30th (Thursday) Fasting for Mokshada Ekadashi.

***** 1st December Break fast @ 04h47 – 09h25 (Durban)
@ 05h07 – 09h40 (Jhb)
@ 05h28 – 10h13 (Cape Town)

(Do note, Hindu calenders state that the 29th November as Ekadashi but it's *** Ashuddha Ekadashi (not pure), hence Mokshada Ekadashi is observed on the next day the 30th)
*** Please read all about Ashuddha and Shuddha Ekadashi on page 5 on this article.

December 13th (Wednesday) Fasting for Saphala Ekadashi.

***** 14th December Break fast @ 06h21 – 09h30 (Durban)
@ 06h21 – 09h44 (Jhb)
@ 06h21 – 10h17 (Cape Town)

December 29th (Friday) Fasting for Putrada Ekadashi.

***** 30th December Break fast @ 04h57 – 09h38 (Durban),
@ 05h17 – 09h52 (Jhb)
@ 05h37 – 10h25 (Cape Town)

*** Shuddha means pure and Ashuddha means impure. One should not observe a fast on an Ekadashi that's not pure (Ashuddha) as quoted from the sastric verses below. Therefore at times one has to fast on Dvadashi (the next day – the 12th day) if that Ekadashi is not pure. How does an Ekadashi become impure? This happens when the 10th and 11th Vedic days overlaps. Then this Ekadashi is regarded as impure and thus should not be observed.



Quotes from scriptures

Ekadashi (the 11th day) and Dvadashi (the 12th day) are both qualified for fasting. Furthermore, one should fast when Ekadashi is combined with Dvadashi, but one should never fast when Ekadashi is combined with Dashami (the 10th day) (HARI BHAKTI VILASA 12/202 from SAURA DHARMOTTARA).

Any devotee of the Lord who knowingly or unknowingly observes Ekadashi overlapped with Dashami should certainly understand that Lord Shree Vishnu would not be happy with him. (HARI BHAKTI VILASA 12/246 from SKANDA PURANA)

For Ekadashi dates in your area please follow this link...

<http://www.vaisnavacalendar.info/calendar-file-downloads/text-file-calendars>

So if your prayers fall on Ekadashi you should respectfully and humbly ask your Priest/Punditji to perform it the next day or on another auspicious day...

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Thank you so much for taking the time to read this article. We pray that this article will assist you in some way and we also pray that it helps you to appreciate the beauty and remarkable foresight of our ancient Hindu culture. We wish to educate all readers and demystify the path of Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma). Please feel free to share these articles with friends and family who do not have direct access to our website or articles. If you use the articles in any form including blogs and/or as part of other articles kindly credit our website as a source. We hope that the articles serve as a reference to you and your family when you need clarification of certain topics. Jai Hind... Jai Shree Ekadashi Devi.

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