

VAIKUNTHA EKADASHI – THE DAY TO HAVE DIVYA DARSHAN OF LORD SHRIMANNARAYANA

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One aspect of today is that *Lord Srimannarayana* will give us *Darshan* along with three crores of deities. The other aspect is that, fasting this day, we will reap the same *Punya* as we fasted for three crore *Ekadashis*. The number of deities as described in our *Puranas* is three crore.

However as per the Vedic tenet “*Asahasrath*” this number is infinite. The school of Upanishads proposed uniqueness of God as the ultimate truth and the same school expanded the uniqueness of the God in to three crores in three *lokas* (Worlds) of this universe.

***Vaikuntha Ekadasi* is the day on which God gives us *Darshan* along with all the three crore deities accompanying him from all the three *lokas* of this universe!**



Vaikhunta Ekadashi or *Mukkoti Ekadashi* is one of the most auspicious occasions for all devout Hindus. To understand the significance of this auspicious occasion one needs to dig in to the background of this day. *Ekadashi* in Sanskrit has multiple meanings. It stands for the name of a goddess, king of the 15 *Thithis* which can control the senses that in turn control us, the day when we follow fasting and finally a day which is the dearest day to the God *Hari* and hence referred to as *Hari Vasaram*.

As per the Hindu Lunar calendar a Lunar month starts with the *Thithi Padyami* and the first half of the fifteen days period of ascending moon is called *Shukla Paksha*. The second half of the month of descending moon is called *Krishna Paksha* and in both *pakshas*, the eleventh day is called *Ekadashi* and thus there are two *Ekadashis* every month and 24 *Ekadahsis* every lunar year. In case there is *Adhika masam*, that is an extra month, there could be two more *Ekadashis* and hence a maximum of 26 *Ekadashis* are likely to occur in a year. All *Ekadashis* have their own significance and revered equally by

devout Hindus who undertake fasting on that day and spend their time in worshipping the God. The staunch belief is that fasting on *Ekadashi* brings us greatest *Punya Phala*.

Of all *Eakadashis*, the *Ekadashi* that occurs during *Shukla Paksha* during the period of sun's traversal of the *Dhanus Rasi*, is called *Mukkoti Eakadashi* or *Vaikhunta Ekadashi*. This typically occurs in the Lunar Month *Margasheersham* or *Pushyam*.

What is the significance of Mukkoti Ekadashi?

Mukkoti means 3 crores or 30 Million. This is the number of deities (*Devathas*) along with whom Lord *Shrimannarayana* gives us *darshan* on this day! In another interpretation, on fasting this *Ekadashi* brings us the entire *Punya Phala* equivalent to fasting 3 crores *Ekadashis*! *Upanishads* proclaim the universal truth of single Lord *Srimannarayana* and at the same time expand his glory across 3 crores of divine entities in three *lokas* (worlds) surrounding the Lord.

This *Ekadashi* is also referred to as *Vaikuntha Ekadashi* as the Lord's abode is believed to be *Vaikuntham*.

Legends behind Mukkoti Ekadashi

In *kritha yuga*, a demon (*Rakshasa*) king *Mura* used to rule with *Chandravathi* city as his capital. He had a son named *Thala Jhanga* who was a perpetrator of all *Devathas*. Lord *Shrimannarayana* finally killed the *Rakshasa* and according to *Vratha Chudamani*, this is done on *Shukla Paksha Ekadashi* day in the month of *Marga Sheersha*. This legend is also popular in *Bhavishyath Purana* as the origin of *Ekadashi*.

According to another legend, *Mridumanya* a demon and son of *Kumbha* did worship *Shiva* in a penance and obtained a boon from Lord *Shiva* to not to get killed by anybody on the earth except by a woman who took birth spontaneously but not through by usual human reproduction. To kill *Mridumanya*, Lord *Vishnu* chased him and entered in to a cave called *Sihmavathi*. While entering the cave, Lord's body rubbed against the walls of the cave and out of the friction, born a woman called *Ekadashi* who in turn killed the demon.

After killing of the demons, *Ekadashi* sought three boons from *Srimannarayana*. They are:

1. Of all the *thithis*, *Ekadashi* should be the dearest *Thithi* to *Srimannarayana*
2. Of all the *thithis*, *Ekadashi* should be the best *thithi*
3. Whoever undertakes fasting on *Ekadashi* day should be given *Moksha* by *Srimannarayana*.

Lord readily agreed for all the three boons. The power of *Ekadashi upvasa vratham* is so mighty that it not only saved *Amabareesha* from the curse of Sage *Durvasa*; but also put the sage in to troubles!

Three states of human mind

Human mind can exist in three states namely *Jagruthi* – Awakened, *Swapna* – Dreaming, *Sushupthi* – Sleeping. The word *Koti* also means “curved” by the axiom “*Kutattheethi Koti: Kuta Koutithye*”. In an

infinite plane, a curve occurs at the edges. In other words *Mukkoti* signifies touching the edges of all the three states of human mind and *Mukkoti Ekadashi* makes us free from all sins by touching these edges.

As per our scriptures, the living beings on this earth are classified in to four varieties that is 1. *Pindaja* – Born out of womb, 2. *Andaja* – Born out of an egg 3. *Swedaja* – Born out of Sweat and 4. *Udhabija* – Born out of Seeds. When Lord *Brahma* created this world, a demon was born from his sweat and *Brahma* decided all food on *Ekadashi* day to belong to this demon. If we eat food on *Ekadashi* day, it amounts we are eating food meant for the demon. Hence we need to fast on *Ekadashi* Day.

As per *Yoga Shastra*, the “*Agya Chakra*” will be energized if we undertake fasting on *Shukla Ekadashi* day and *Anahata Chakra* will be energized if we undertake fasting on *Krishna Ekadashi* Day.

SANKALPAM

***Ekaadashyo Niraahaaro Bhuthvahamaparehani
Bhokshyaami Pundarikaksha Sharanamme Bhavaachyutha***

Meaning, Oh My Lord *Shrimannaraayana*! This *Ekadashi* day, I will undertake fasting and I will touch the food only the next day i.e. *Dwadashi*. I take shelter at your lotus feet; please shower your grace on me!

Chant the *Mantra* – *Om Namo Naraayanaaya, Om Namo Bhagavathe Vasudevaaya*



ON THE EVE OF MUKKOTI EKADASHI TODAY

Uttara Dwara Darshanam

Which side is east? We know that east is the direction facing us when we stand facing the rising sun, and our back points to the direction of west, head points to north (*Uttara*) upward direction (*Urdhwa Disha*) and feet point to the south (*Dakshina*) or downward (*Adho Disha*) direction. Hence *Uttara Dwara Darshanam* means looking at the Omnipresent Lord *Srimannarayana* in the sky in the *Shravana Nakshatra Mandal* in the Milky Way surrounded by three crores of *devathas* in the form of stars. Since the sky also envisaged as our mind, it also means realizing and looking at the God within our inner self and in our own mind.

Our Almanac

Our almanac writers mention *Mukkoti Ekadashi* as “*Sri Ranga Dwarastha Bhgavadaalokana Mahotsavam*” in their *panchangas*. In these temples of *Vishnu*, there is a door specially known as “*Uttara Dwaram*” and this will be opened only on the *Mukkoti Ekadashi* day through which we need to have the *Darshan* of the lord. The lord in *Srirangam* will be facing south direction and we will be having *Darshan* of the lord through *Uttara Dwaram*.

Story of Vibhishana and Srirangam

After the *Pralaya* (Apocalypse resulting in total destruction), Lord *Vishnu*, resting on *Adishesha*, along with his better halves and with groups of *Devathas*, gave *darshan* to *Brahma* and taught *Jyothish Shastra* to him. As per the desire of Lord *Brahma*, he materialized in to the *Vimana* and a *Murthi* (idol) was thus formed. In the later days, *Ikshwaks* got this *Murthi*, and subsequently the *Murthi* reached *SriRama*. Before his ascent to *Vaikuntham*, Lord Sri Rama gave it to *Vibhishana*. *Vibhishana* handed over the *Murthi* to *Vinayaka* and was performing *Sandhya Vandanam* on the shores of *Kaveri* where the current *Srirangam* temple stands. Meanwhile *Vinayaka* kept the *Murthi* on the ground and the *Murthi* got attached there to the ground permanently. As per the *Sthala Purana of Srirangam*, from this time forward, *Vibhishana* comes every year on the occasion of *Mukkoti Ekaadashi*, and worships the *Murthi* who is the presiding main deity at *Srirangam*. *Srirangam* Temple is surrounded by *Saptha Praakaaras*(7 Compounds) and the specialty here is that there is a temple of *Vibhishana* between the first and second compounds. *Srirangam* Temple is like *Vaikhuntam* on this earth. In this sacred place the deity faces the South and his devotee *Vibhishana*, with folded hands faces north and is engaged in the continuous worship of the Lord, who appears as if he is blessing *Vibhishana*. This itself is the sacred *Uttara Dwara Darshanam*!

As per Padma Puranam, Uttara Khandam

The *Devathas* and *Rakshsas*(Gods and Demons) started churning the Ocean of Milk(*Ksheera Samudram*) on *Ekadashi* day. *Devathas* fasted on that day and the next day *Mahalaxmi* emerged from the Ocean. *Maha Vishnu* addressed the *Devathas* and appreciated the fact that they were fasting on the day of *Ekadashi* and told them that all the sins committed by different organs of the body will get nullified by the fasting one undertakes on the *Ekadashi* Day. One day prior to *Ekaadashi vratham* i.e. on *Dashimi* day, one has to take single meal and sleep on hard floor. On the next day i.e. on *Ekadashi* day, one has

to take bath with *Amla* (Goose Berry) pulp and observe complete fasting. The next day one has to perform *Vishnu Puja* and take food and this is how the *Ekaadashi vratham* needs to be performed.

How to perform fasting?

We need to undertake fasting on *Ekadashi* Day to get the best of the spiritual rewards and *Punya*. Fasting is of four types: 1. *Eka Bhuktham* (Take lunch only), 2. *Naktham* (Take dinner alone), 3. *Ayachitham/Yadha Labdham* (Eat *Prasadam* provided in temples or by other devotees), 4. *Sampurnam* (Complete fasting, not eating any food during the whole day). *Vayu purana* suggests a practical short cut to overcome the likely problems in the current times, because of compulsions like medications and other health constraints.

***Naktham havishyanna manodanamvaa, phalam thila: ksheera mathaambuchaaajyam
Yathpanchagavyam yadivaapivaaya: prashtha mathrothara muththavantha***

Meaning, just have air, or take *panchgavyam*, ghee, water, milk, sesame seeds (*Thila*), fruits, *Havishyanna* (soaked moong dal) or *Naktham* (Dinner alone) to undertake fasting without causing any compromise to Fasting (*Upavasa Vratham*) and also for reaping all the spiritual rewards (*Punya*) for the *Vratham*. Those who are in good health must undertake complete fasting as *Ekadashi* itself means fasting!

Scientific Angle to Ekadashi

Moon moves 12° degrees in its orbit around the earth and in one *paksha* it moves 180° degrees. It completes one full circle of 360° degrees by moving 180° degrees during new moon to full moon and another 180 degrees from full moon to new moon. During the *Ekaadashi* period, the angle will be from 120° degrees to 132° degrees. This is referred to as "*Trikona Samayam*". It is evident and practically seen on how Moon affects the tides of the sea during the Full Moon and No Moon days resulting in high tide and low tide. Water is present in human body to the extent of 80% and on *Ekadashi* day the rays of moon impact abdominal part of the human body and if the stomach is full with food during this time one may lose their digestive capacity. To prevent this, one has to undertake fasting during this day. This practice of fasting thus has a scientific angle as per Sri Patika Reddy. Like the eclipses occur when the moon, earth and sun are in the same line, similar phenomenon occurs during the *Ekadashi* day due to the angle between these celestial bodies.

What we need to do on Mukkoti Ekadashi

- We need to wake up early before the rising of the sun and take bath after applying *Amla* (Goose berry) pulp thoroughly to the body
- We need to have *Darshan* of *Srimmanarayana* in *Brahmi Muhurtha* (One hour before sunrise) in the temple through the *Uttara Dwara*
- Do fasting and undertake *Mouna Vrata* i.e. not to speak with anybody throughout the day
- To the extent possible do not touch anybody
- Recite *Vishnu Sahasra Nama* in your mind

- As we cannot stay without water, have water with *Thulasi* (Basil) leaves
- If it becomes imminent that you should take food, take food without salt, spices and oil. You may use *Saindhava Lavanam* (Rock Salt) in place of salt if needed
- Keep awake during the night

In this season, the length of day is less and length of night is more and hence body may not get as much heat as required during the day. To compensate for this we need to do fasting and *Jagaran* (Keeping awake in the night). In the modern era people are used to all kinds of beverages like tea and coffee etc. and get habituated to bad habits and food and spoil their health. *Mukkoti Ekadashi* is an occasion to de-toxify the body and cleanse the mind by undertaking fasting and *Jagaran*. *Vaikuntha Ekadashi* is the festival which provides both health and spiritual benefits. Let us all follow the same.