



# श्री सनातन धर्म सभा – दक्षिण आफ्रिका

**Shree Sanathan Dharma Sabha of South Africa**

Established 1941

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## Shravan Maas (The Month of Shravan)

### Introduction

Shravan Maas forms an integral part of the austere period known as Chaturmaas (the four months of austerity). Chaturmaas commences on the Ekadashi Thithi of Ashaad Maas. The first full month of the Chaturmaas period is Shravan. During this period, many Hindus refrain from any major events that are material (like purchasing new homes, weddings, and other functions). They dedicate this time to pure devotion and austerity.

The month of Shravan is popular for devotees of Lord Shiva, but research shows that this month is special to all followers of Sanathan Dharma. Further, Lord Shiva advises that all deities are to be worshipped during the month. He mentions Chaturthi, Ekadashi, Dwadashi, and Raksha Bandhan. Lord Hayagriva also appeared on the Purnima of this month.

It is believed that Mother Parvathy observed austerities in Shravan Maas to obtain Lord Shiva as her husband. Further, it is believed that Markandeya also observed austerities in this month to become Chiranjeevi (one with an unusually long life) when he was initially destined to die at a very young age.

### Benefits of Observing Austerities and Pious Acts in Shravan Maas

In the Shravan Maas Mahatmyam of the Skanda Puran, Lord Shiva says to Sanat Kumar:

*The information I am sharing is very precious (secret). Of the 12 months, Shravan is most dear to me. Who can adequately describe the benefits of doing pious acts in this month? Even Brahma, the creator with four mouths, cannot adequately describe it, nor can the 1000-eyed Indra fully see the benefits of this purest month. There is not even one day this month when a beneficial fast is absent. People in all four ashrams of existence (Brahmachari, Grihastha, Vaanprastas, and Sannyasa) should observe Vrata (fast) this month. Observing fast, one should perform Rudra Abhishek daily.*

The month is so named because a special Nakshatra (star) called Shravan Nakshatra prevails during the Purnima (Full moon) of this Month. The timing of this star and the grace of Lord Shiva make the efforts of the entire month complete and fulfilling. This means that the fruits of austerities performed during this month undoubtedly manifest. Purna means 'full' or 'complete'. He further states that He will grant liberation (Moksha) to those who observe this month with devotion and faith but desire nothing. Millions of sins are washed away when the prescribed activities are performed with love, devotion and understanding. The observance is conducive to obtaining good children, a good wife or husband, alleviation of poverty, alleviation of illness, and achieving success in careers and goals. All pious deeds performed this month certainly led to positive change. This is the promise of Lord Shiva.

### **How to Observe Shravan Maas**

Devotees embark on pilgrimages during this period, often barefoot, along the banks of the Ganga, and sometimes more than 300 kilometres in distance. The 12 Jyotirlingas are also extremely popular during this period, and millions approach these shrines to give thanks and express their love. All of this is done with high levels of discipline and consciousness.

In South Africa, we should try to observe Shravan Maas, together with our family members, following the path of our ancestors and learned seers. We are merely custodians of a great heritage. We must not let this diminish or be lost at the expense of our descendants. How will we answer them if we allow it to be lost? Such observances always lead to greater things and open new doors.

Some of the Prescribed methods of observance are: -

- Fast daily and take a meal at 4 pm or shortly thereafter.
- Make a special bedi and establish thereon Murtis of Shiv and Parvathy. Decorate it according to your means. Let your homes become temples.
- When possible, light and offer 16 ghee diyas around the Murtis (especially on a Tuesday). This is called a Shodash Deep Mala.
- Perform Rudra Abhishek every day in some way at home, but at least do it at a temple (where full Abhishek is performed) on the Mondays of Shravan Maas. This is done with Ganga-Jal, with Milk and Panchamrit. If possible, perform Abhishek at the temple while the Rudri Paat (Astadhyayi Rudra) or Namakam and Chamakam are chanted. These are highly beneficial chants and contain mantras from the Veda.

- Offer flowers of various kinds, fruits and Tulasi flowers (with their stems). Try to obtain a variety of beautiful flowers by offering them. Each fulfils various human needs. White flowers, for example, bring good health and help end illness.
- Donate cotton wool or batthi (wicks) together with Butter Ghee to the temples for Aarthi.
- Perform Pooja on a Shiv Ling. If one does not have Shiv Ling, he should make one with clay or sand.
- Offer bel leaves
- Offer a Rudraksha Mala and wear one.
- Perform Brahmin Bhojan (At least feed your family priest)
- Try to sleep on the floor and remain celibate
- Fasting may be done in various ways depending on ability, viz. Only take Fruits/Sweet Prasadh made with ghee/Only grains.
- Chanting of the mantra **AUM NAMAH SHIVAAYA**
- Pradakshina (To walk around the Deity)
- Recitation of Veda Mantra, Rudra Suktam and Purusha Suktam
- Some do not eat Herbs (saag) during Shravan. Some do not eat rice during this month. You should also give up at least one bad habit. Make the effort, and Lord Shiva will do the rest.
- Feed all hungry creatures.
- Bhajans and Kirtans should be sung.
- Perform Hawan using Maha Mrithyunjaya and other mantras with grains
- Perform Hawan using AUM NAMAH SHIVAY with Kheer
- Offer a ghee lamp daily or as often as possible
- Observe Maun Vrat (Do not speak) on certain days when possible
- Donate Scriptures and valuable books about Dharma
- Be free of ego, anger, greed, and lust. Control the senses and remain focused or Sewa.
- Donate kindly to temples, charitable organisations, the needy and Brahmins.
- Perform Pilgrimage- at least to your local temples.
- Chaturmaas commences on Ashaad Ekadashi
- Chaturmaas Ends on Kartik Ekadashi

**Set an example for the younger generation to follow. Be the change that you want to see. If you cannot manage the entire month, at least observe all the Mondays of the month, Amavasya and Purnima.**

**References:**

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Skanda Puran

**We pray that you have faith in the words of Lord Shiva and will make the most of Shravan Maas 2024.**

**Aum Namah Shivaya**



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