



**WHEN?**

With seven days in the week, a different form of God is said to govern each day. Depending upon the purpose of the day, one fasts accordingly. A common reason for fasting is to get over the malefic effects of a particular God or planet, or to achieve your goal through blessings from the Divine. Each day requires one to read a different katha, recite a different Aarti and carry out a specific form of worship.

Sunday is devoted to Surya, the Sun. When fasting on Sunday, food is eaten once in the day before sunset. The food must not be tamasic (food that develops ignorance) or contain any oil or salt. When inclined to give charity it is custom to give wheat, red pulses, jaggery, metals or gems.

Monday is devoted to Chandrama, the Moon. Many Hindus observe 'saumya pradosh' where they fast for 16 Mondays to seek pardon for their faults. You are permitted to eat once a day with the allowance of cereal consumption. When inclined to give charity it is custom to give white items such as rice, pearls, white clothes etc.

Tuesday is devoted to Mangal (Mars). Many Hindus observe this fast for 12 consecutive Tuesdays. Prayers are offered to Lord Hanuman and food is prepared from wheat and jaggery with its consumption once in the day.

Wednesday is devoted to Budh (Mercury). One is expected to eat green things once a day and prayers are offered to Lord Shiva. When inclined to give charity it is custom to give green gram, musk, blue clothes, gold, copper or five gems.

Thursday is devoted to Brihaspati (Jupiter). Prayers are offered to Briheshpeshwar Mahadev (Lord Shiva) and food must be consumed once a day with yellow pulses. When inclined to give charity it is custom to give turmeric, salt, yellow clothes, yellow pulses, gold or topaz.

Friday is devoted to Shukra (Venus). This fast requires you to eat once a day with the consumption of white preparations such as rice porridge and milk preparations. Those inclined to charity must give rice, white clothes, ghee, diamond or gold.

Saturday is devoted to Shani (Saturn). Shani is fond of black items such as clothes, sesame seeds, iron and oil. When inclined to give charity one should give blacking things.

Many Vaishnavas (devotees of Lord Vishnu) choose to fast on Ekadashi (11th day of the lunar month) out of austerity to purify themselves and spend greater time in prayer and worship. Similarly, many people fast on important festivals such as Ram Navmi, Mahashivratri or Krishna Janmashtami. This has the benefits

of austerity but also the practical motive in that less time can be spent in preparing food and more time in worshipping Bhagavan.

Fasting has various health benefits that are finally being uncovered by the scientific world. It is an ancient practice that is not exclusive to Hindus alone: nearly every culture has incorporated fasts as part of their lives.

**Mentioned in**

Vedas and Bhagavad Gita

**When**

Chosen day of the week, Ekadashi or special ustav

**What**

Prayer, Aarti, food and charity

**Goal**

Self control, harmony, specific goals