



Bharatha Samskruthi Prakashana

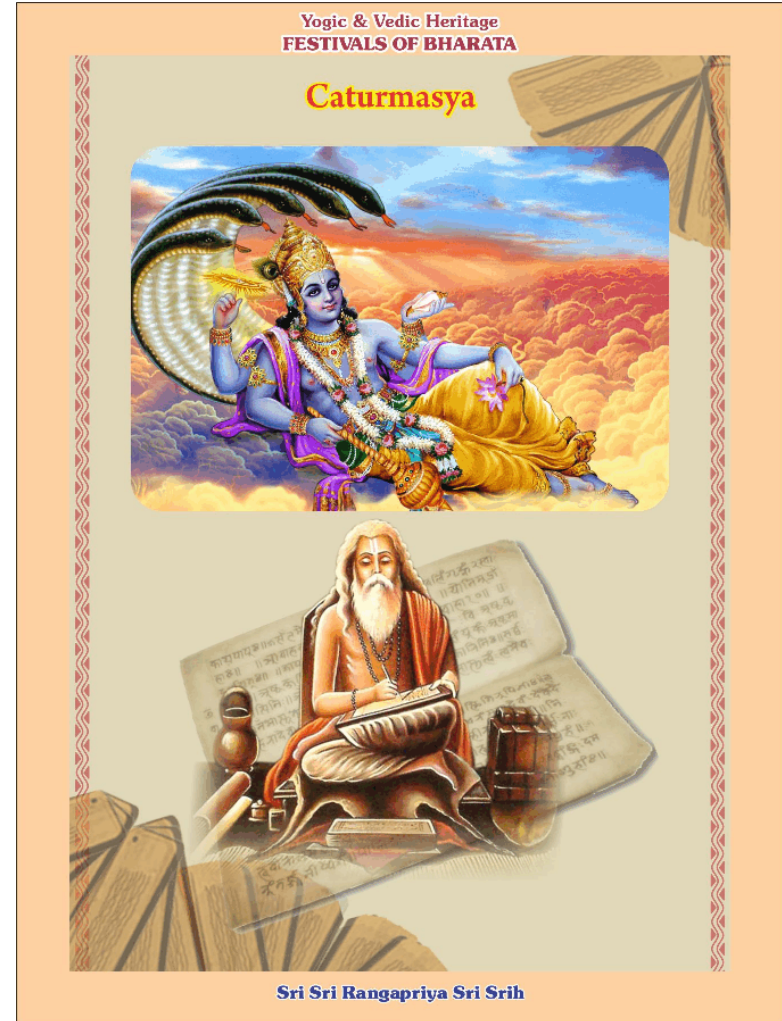
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We Dedicate this Sacred Treasure at the holy lotus feet of

Sriranga Mahaguru and SriMata

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अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ऌ	ॡ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अः
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ	ṝ	ḷ	ḹ	e	ai	o	au	am	ah
क	ख	ख	ग	ङ											
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa											
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ											
ca	cha	ja	jha	ña											
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण											
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa											
त	थ	द	ध	न											
ta	tha	da	dha	na											
प	फ	ब	भ	म											
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma											
य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ह								
ya	ra	la	va	śa	sha	sa	ha								

Example:

क	का	कि	की	कु	कू	कृ	कृ	क्लृ	के	कै	को	कौ	कं	कः
ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū	kṛ	kṛ	klṛ	ke	kai	ko	kau	kam	kah



Cāturmāsya

1. Importance of *cāturmāsya*

Though the name *cāturmāsya* is familiar to many of us in the row of *vratas*, there is an impression that it is related to monks and some *Maḍi hengasaru* (some women in the olden days who were very orthodox) and people belonging to the other *Āśramas* need not consider it. This is a result of misunderstanding. From the view point of *śāstras* this is a *parva* that should be observed by everyone. This does not belong either to the category called *naimittika karma*, a rite which should be performed because of a *nimitta*; Or a *kāmya karma* a rite which is performed only for the fulfillment of a specific desire, which need not be observed otherwise. It happens to be a *nitya karma* only, as it belongs to a category in which certain rituals are

mandatory at some distinct times, and the blemish of sinfulness may occur if they are not observed. There is no doubt that it must be specially observed by *sanyāsis*. But the *śāstras* say that is the duty of all i.e. people belonging to all *Āśramas*, to observe it to the extent possible.

चत्वार्येतानि नित्यानि चतुराश्रमवर्णिनाम् ।

नित्यान्येतानि विप्रेन्द्र व्रतान्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥ (स्कान्दपुराण)

The *Mahābhārata* proclaims that if this *vrata* is not observed, one will be stuck with the sins of the whole year.

वार्षिकांश्चतुरो मासान् वाहयेत् केनचिन्नरः ।

व्रतेन नोचेदाप्नोति किल्बिषं वत्सरोद्भवम् ॥

2. Names and their etymology:

As this *vrata* comes regularly for a period four months every year. it is called '*cāturmāsya*'. ("*Caturshu māseshu bhavah*"). As all the four months of observance are the months of rainy season, it is called "*Varshartu Vrata*" also.

3. Description of the time of observance:

This *vrata* should be begun on the day of *ekādaśī* or *dvādaśī* or *pūrṇimā* of the bright half of *Āshādhā māsa*. It must be begun either on the days of *karkāṭaka saṅkramaṇa* or, in case of difficulties, on the day of *Tulā saṅkramaṇa*. Whatever may be the day it is begun, it should be concluded on the day of *utthāna dvādaśī*.

आषाढशुक्लद्वादश्यां पौर्णमास्यामथापि वा ।
चातुर्मास्यव्रतारम्भं कुर्यात् कर्कटसङ्क्रमे ।
अभावे तु तुलार्केऽपि मन्त्रेण नियमं व्रती ॥ (वराह पुराण)

चातुर्मास्यव्रतग्रहणे कालचतुष्टयम् -आषाढी
पौर्णमासी शुक्लाएकादशी द्वादशी कर्काटक
सङ्क्रान्तिश्च' समाप्तिस्तु द्वादश्यामेव ।
चतुर्था गृह्य वै चीर्णं चातुर्मास्यव्रतम् नरम्
कार्तिके शुक्लपक्षे तु द्वादश्यां तत्समापयेत् ॥ (निर्णयसिन्धु)

The *Bhavishya purāṇa* states that *daiva kāryas* and *pitṛ kāryas* should not be performed in the intercalary month, ie the month without the *Sankrānti* and also during *āśauca*.

असङ्क्रान्तं तथा मासं दैवे पित्र्ये च कर्मणि ।
मलमासमाशौचं च वर्जयेन्मतिमान्नरः ॥

As *Cāturmāsya* is an exceptional observance of *Devapūjā Karmas*, should it be observed during the above prohibited time, if it happens to come during *cāturmāsya* or not? Also, times such as *Gurvasta* and *Śukrāsta* are generally prohibited times for *śubha karmas*. So, Should *cāturmāsya* be observed at such times or not? The answer is, as *cāturmāsya* is a 'nitya vrata' even the above prohibitions (of time) are not applicable to it.

न शैशवं न मौढ्यं च शुक्रगुर्वेर्नवा तिथेः।
खण्डत्वं चिन्तयेदादौ चातुर्मास्यविधौ नरः ॥

After the *vrata* is begun it must be continued even if one is touched by *Āśauca* in the middle. So

this is an important *vrata* that must be observed without taking into consideration any prohibition mentioned for certain times.

4. A few objections pertaining to the observance of this *vrata* and answers to them.

(a) The name of this *yajna* called *cāturmāsya* appears both in *Vedas* and *smṛtis*. But it is not the famous *cāturmāsya* mentioned in the *purāṇas* that is being currently practiced. When we study the *vedaśāstras*, we find that there are some season-related *vidhis*, which have to be observed on the full moon days of the months of *caitra*, *phālguna*, *Āshāḍha* and *kārtika*. They are called 'vaiśva deva', *varuṇa praghāsa*, and *śākhamedha*. Other than this, there is a fourth (*vrata*) by name 'śunāsīrīya'. These are the four *cāturmāsya*s prescribed in the *Śrutis*. This alone is the *vaidika cāturmāsya* that has been prescribed by *Āpstamba*, *Āśwalāyana* and *yājñavalkya* and other *smṛtikāras*.

The *cāturmāsya* that is being currently observed does not belong to this class. So, can't this *cāturmāsya* be given up as it is unvaidik and of recent origin? This is the first objection.

पौर्णमासेनेष्ट्वा चातुर्मास्यव्रतान्युपेयात्
प्रतिसंवत्सरं सोमः पशुः प्रत्ययनं तथा ।
कर्तव्याग्रयणेष्टिश्च चातुर्मास्यानि चैव च ॥

This is not a strong objection at all. It is our tradition that the mandates of *purāṇas* and *Itihāsas* are equally honourable as *śrutis* and *Smṛtis*, if they are not opposed to *Śrutis* and *Smṛtis*. And, we have been proclaiming the attitude right from the beginning that, if the outcome of the observance of any precepts proves to be truly beneficial, they should be observed even though they are not mentioned in the *Śrutis*, *Smṛtis*, *Itihāsa*, *purāṇas*, *Āgamas* etc. **Here, we humbly remember the teaching of Śrīgurudeva who said - "If there are mandates which are *Yuktisiddhas* which (established by means of experiments) stated by different *ācaryās* prove to be good to one's soul and the world, as is evident from the words "नानादेशिकवक्त्रस्थैः प्रयोगैर्युक्तिकल्पितैः they should be followed, even though they do not find a mention in the *śāstras*. It should be noted here that the rules of food and *Brahmacarya* etc. precepted by the *purāṇas* regarding *cāturmāsyā* have been included in the codes of *cāturmāsyā* by *smṛtikārās* also. For example, one should not have his hair cut during that period, should not sleep on a cot, should not consume liquor, meat, and salt and should not have sex. One should not utter lies. "केशान् कर्तयीत अधः शयीत मधुमांसलवणस्त्रीसङ्गमादीन् वर्जयेत् जुगुप्सेतानृतात् ।**

So the *cāturmāsyā* which involves the *niyamas* that have the consent of all the *śāstrakārās*, which

can bring about *Ātmasamskāra*, should necessarily be observed.

b) *Cāturmāsyā* is a *Kāmyavrata*

For example, the *purāṇas* say - if one follows the rule of abstaining from consuming jaggery, his voice becomes melodious. If one gives up the use of oil (in food) he becomes handsome.

मधुस्वरो भवेन्नित्यं नरो गुडविवर्जनात् ।

तैलस्य वर्जनादेव सुन्दराङ्गः प्रजायते ।

The second objection is that these types of "*kāmyavratas*" should not be observed by devotees of God.

This is not a strong objection. Because desires that are not opposed to *Dharma* are indeed dear to God. The *Gītācārya* proclaims "धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ" So, not all '*Kāmyakarmas*' are prohibited for devotees. Further, by following the rules ordained for *cāturmāsyā* with reference to food, the unsteadiness of the tongue gets reduced. And the restraint of senses facilitates *dhyāna* and worship. If that *vrata* is observed for the love of God, even longing for the desires vanishes. If *cāturmāsyā* were to be only a *Kāmyavrata* why would *śāstras* prescribe them for *sanyāsis* also?

Some people raise an objection saying that this is specially observed in North India. And that too it

is women who mainly observe it, and so is not a universal observation in India.

Even this is a very ordinary objection. If good customs are followed - be it in North India or South India, or observed by women or by men, all should follow them if they bestow *purushārthas*.

The modalities of the *vrata*

Those who observe the *vrata* should go on fast, worship *Śrī Nārāyaṇa* and pray him "O Lord! I am observing this *vrata* in your *Sānnidhya*. This can be completed without hurdles, only with your blessings. In case my life departs from the body in the middle of this *vrata*, let me obtain the fruits, of the *vrata* then also with your blessings." And, reducing the worldly activities as much as possible, one should worship Lord *Nārāyaṇa* who is delightful in the posture of sleep, with meditation, stotra and worship etc. One should follow *Brahmacarya*. One should give up *Rāga* and *dvesha*. Lies should not be uttered. Robes suitable to the *vrata* should be put on. One should abstain from violence to animals. Food prohibited by scriptures and causing disturbance to the *Samyama* should not be consumed. Liquor and meat should be given up during all the four months. It is good to give up

some particular food items during some months. For example, One should not use vegetables in *śrāvaṇa māsa*, curds in *bhādrapadamāsa*, milk in *āśvayuja māsa* and pulses in *kārtika māsa*. (These are respectively called the *śākavrata*, *dadhivrata*, *kshīravrata* and *dhānyavrata*).

श्रावणे वर्जयेच्छाकं दधि भाद्रपदे तथा ।

दुग्धमाश्रयुजे मासि कार्तिके द्विदलं त्यजेत् ॥

It is good to totally give up pulses, guava fruit and brinjal.

द्विदलं बहुबीजं च वृन्ताकं च विवर्जयेत् ।

नित्यान्येतानि विप्रेन्द्र व्रतान्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥

Similarly it is good to forego ash gourd, radish, sugarcane, jujube fruit, fresh *Āmalaka* fruit and tamarind.)

विशेषाद् बदरीं धात्रीं कूष्माण्डं तिन्त्रिणीं त्यजेत्॥

It can't be called a *vrata* if someone takes a vow that he is going to give up fruits and vegetables that are not liked by him, or gives up fruits and vegetables that are not available in that season. One should give up what is prohibited by the *śāstras* and the food items which cause greater unsteadiness (fickleness) of the tongue. One should give up with some effort, the vegetables that are available in plenty in that season.

तत्तत्कालोद्भवाश्शाकाः वर्जनीयाः प्रयत्नतः ।

Among vegetables, the most prohibited is brinjal. That is why the saying "*purāṇa heḷalikke badanekāyi tinnalikke*" has come up.

It is best to consume only *haviṣhyānna* in all these four months. Sins get redeemed by this and it facilitates restraint and *dhyānayoga*.

चतुर्वर्षीह मासेषु हविष्याशी न पापभाक् (विष्णुधर्मोत्तर)

At the end of the *vrata*, *śrotriyas* should be invited and they should be informed of the *vrata* that has been taken up. They should be fed well and offered *Dakṣiṇā*. They should be gifted with cow, land, gold and clothes etc. To the extent possible, it is better to make *Godāna*, *Vastradāna*, *Śayyādāna*, *Vastradāna*, *godāna* and *Suvarṇamūrtidāna* to couples, corresponding to the *vratas* observed by the devotee viz., eating once a day, eating only in the night, sleeping on the ground, giving up of vegetables, giving up of curds, liquor and ghee, and the observance of *brahmacaryā*.

The benefits of observing Cāturmāsya:

Those who have observed the *vrata* with a *Kāmyadṛṣhti* giving up jaggery, oil, pungent oil, betel nut and betel leaves, ghee, fruits, vegetable dishes curds and milk, will obtain the benefits of sweet voice, beautiful body, destruction of enemies, enjoyment of material

pleasures, loveliness, intelligence and progeny of many of sons, cooked food and sweet dishes food and attainment of the *goloka* respectively. If one gives up these for the love of God, he will obtain devotion to God through the restraint of senses. By observing *Brahmacarya* one will develop strength of the body, the senses, the mind, and intellect, and the accomplishment of *dhyāna yoga*. By worshipping God who is in the posture of sleep the *jnāna*, *bhakti* and *Vairāgyas* of the person will increase. *Grhasthas* obtain enjoyments which are not opposed to *yoga*, by worshipping God who in the posture of just woken up from sleep.

Cāturmāsya of sanyāsis

Sanyāsis have some more distinct *Vidhis* in addition to the dos and don'ts regarding food.

A *sanyāsi* should undertake the observance on the full moon day of the month of *āshāḍha*. If there are difficulties, he is allowed to take the vow till the next *pañcamī*. If that *pañcamī* also passes (without the vow) he will be subjected to *Prāyaścitta*.

अनेन विधिना भिक्षुः आषाढ्यां सुसमाहितः ।

प्रायश्चित्तेन युज्येत पञ्चम्यूर्ध्वं ब्रजेद्यदि ॥

He should settle down for the *vrata* after tonsure on the day of *Pūrṇimā* of *Āshāḍha*. He should not have his head tonsured in the middle

till the *vrata* is completed. He should not cross rivers. Should not travel a distance beyond one *krośa*.

आषाढ्यां पौर्णमास्यां तु वपनं कारयेद्व्रतिः ।

तेषु मासेषु केशादीनृतुसंधौ न वापयेत् ॥

नदीश्च न तरेत्तेषु क्रोशादूर्ध्वं न च व्रजेत् ॥

The ascetic should announce in front of *grhasthās* as follows. I will live in one place during these four months when Lord *Mādhava* for the welfare of all living beings is sleeping on *śeṣhaśayana* and wakes up again." Generally creatures will be wandering on the paths during the rainy season. To desist from causing any violence to them, I will stay in this place if it is not inconvenient to you."

माधवश्चतुरो मासान् सर्वभूतहिताय वै।

स्वापं यास्यति शेषाङ्के लक्ष्म्याः सह जगत्पतिः ॥

सुप्तश्चैवोत्थितो यावन्न भवेत्तु सनातनः ।

अहं तावन्निवत्स्यामि सर्वभूतहिताय वै ॥

प्रायेण प्रावृषि प्राणिसङ्कुलं वर्त्म दृश्यते ।

अतस्तेषामहिंसार्थं पक्षान्वै द्विजसंश्रयान् ॥

स्थास्यामश्चतुरो मासान् अत्रैवासतिबाधके ॥

He then holds pure *Mṛttika* in his hands and then salutes the elders, offers it to them and then receiving it as *Prasāda* uses that *Mṛttika* for his observances. Then the the disciples who are by his side request him—"You can observe the *cāturmāsya*

here with happiness. We shall serve you to the extent possible with pleasure, and shall become *Kṛtārthās*"

निवसन्तु सुखेनात्र गमिष्यामः कृतार्थताम् ।

यथाशक्ति च शुश्रूषां करिष्यामो वयं मुदा ॥

And then he starts the *vrata* there.

There is also a custom of worshipping *Bhagavān vedavyāsa*, the *Bhikshusūtrakāra*, *sanaka* and other yogis, *Śrī Gaṇeśa*, *Śrī Durga*, *Śrī Sarasvatī*, *Śrī Kshetrapālakas*, disciples of *Vyāsa* and *gurus* who are *sūtrabhāshyakāras*.

If it is not possible to observe *cāturmāsya* for all the four months, it has to be observed at least for the first two months.

चतुरोऽयं वसेन्मासान् वार्षिकान् द्वावथापि वा॥

वर्षासु ध्रुवशीलः स्यात्।

If *cāturmāsya* is going to be observed for four months, it should be concluded on the full moon day of *Kārtika māsa*, and, if it is to be observed for two months, it should be concluded on the full moon day of *Bhādrapadamāsa*. After tonsure and bath, the remaining sacred earth should be thrown into the water, and travel should be made in the direction of north. He should then go towards north or east. After this he should return.

During these four or two months he should either observe silence, or be in meditation. Or be

engaged in *japa* and *pārāyaṇa*. which facilitate silence and meditation.

Why should a *sanyāsi* observe *cāturmāsya*? The general reason is, travel is difficult during the rainy season and small creatures get troubled by his travel. The significant reason has been mentioned earlier. *Yati* is the representative of *Nārāyaṇa*. During the time when *Nārāyaṇa* is (in the) posture of sleep, the *Yati* also, like that God, should spend the special time in *yoga nidrā* in one place. The day of *Kārtika śuddha dvādaśī* is the day when *Nārāyaṇa* wakes up from *Yoganidrā* and receives *suprabhāta*. The custom of worshipping HIM on that day, and then with HIS permission, the *Yati* ending the vow of silence on the following full moon day and thereafter following the *āshrama dharma* for the sake of service to *Nārāyaṇa*, and starting the journey which brings about the welfare of the world, and also welfare of one's soul, is both natural and beautiful.

