**षटतिला एकादशी**

**युधिष्ठिर ने श्रीकृष्ण से पूछा:** भगवन् ! माघ मास के कृष्णपक्ष में कौन सी एकादशी होती है? उसके लिए कैसी विधि है तथा उसका फल क्या है ? कृपा करके ये सब बातें हमें बताइये ।

**श्रीभगवान बोले:** नृपश्रेष्ठ ! माघ (गुजरात महाराष्ट्र के अनुसार पौष) मास के कृष्णपक्ष की एकादशी ‘षटतिला’ के नाम से विख्यात है, जो सब पापों का नाश करनेवाली है । मुनिश्रेष्ठ पुलस्त्य ने इसकी जो पापहारिणी कथा दाल्भ्य से कही थी, उसे सुनो ।

**दाल्भ्य ने पूछा:** ब्रह्मन्! मृत्युलोक में आये हुए प्राणी प्राय: पापकर्म करते रहते हैं । उन्हें नरक में न जाना पड़े इसके लिए कौन सा उपाय है? बताने की कृपा करें ।

**पुलस्त्यजी बोले:** महाभाग ! माघ मास आने पर मनुष्य को चाहिए कि वह नहा धोकर पवित्र हो इन्द्रियसंयम रखते हुए काम, क्रोध, अहंकार ,लोभ और चुगली आदि बुराइयों को त्याग दे । देवाधिदेव भगवान का स्मरण करके जल से पैर धोकर भूमि पर पड़े हुए गोबर का संग्रह करे । उसमें तिल और कपास मिलाकर एक सौ आठ पिंडिकाएँ बनाये । फिर माघ में जब आर्द्रा या मूल नक्षत्र आये, तब कृष्णपक्ष की एकादशी करने के लिए नियम ग्रहण करें । भली भाँति स्नान करके पवित्र हो शुद्ध भाव से देवाधिदेव श्रीविष्णु की पूजा करें । कोई भूल हो जाने पर श्रीकृष्ण का नामोच्चारण करें । रात को जागरण और होम करें । चन्दन, अरगजा, कपूर, नैवेघ आदि सामग्री से शंख, चक्र और गदा धारण करनेवाले देवदेवेश्वर श्रीहरि की पूजा करें । तत्पश्चात् भगवान का स्मरण करके बारंबार श्रीकृष्ण नाम का उच्चारण करते हुए कुम्हड़े, नारियल अथवा बिजौरे के फल से भगवान को विधिपूर्वक पूजकर अर्ध्य दें । अन्य सब सामग्रियों के अभाव में सौ सुपारियों के द्वारा भी पूजन और अर्ध्यदान किया जा सकता है । अर्ध्य का मंत्र इस प्रकार है:

**कृष्ण कृष्ण कृपालुस्त्वमगतीनां गतिर्भव ।**

**संसारार्णवमग्नानां प्रसीद पुरुषोत्तम ॥**

**नमस्ते पुण्डरीकाक्ष नमस्ते विश्वभावन ।**

**सुब्रह्मण्य नमस्तेSस्तु महापुरुष पूर्वज ॥**

**गृहाणार्ध्यं मया दत्तं लक्ष्म्या सह जगत्पते ।**

‘सच्चिदानन्दस्वरुप श्रीकृष्ण! आप बड़े दयालु हैं । हम आश्रयहीन जीवों के आप आश्रयदाता होइये । हम संसार समुद्र में डूब रहे हैं, आप हम पर प्रसन्न होइये । कमलनयन ! विश्वभावन ! सुब्रह्मण्य ! महापुरुष ! सबके पूर्वज ! आपको नमस्कार है ! जगत्पते ! मेरा दिया हुआ अर्ध्य आप लक्ष्मीजी के साथ स्वीकार करें ।’

तत्पश्चात् ब्राह्मण की पूजा करें । उसे जल का घड़ा, छाता, जूता और वस्त्र दान करें । दान करते समय ऐसा कहें : ‘इस दान के द्वारा भगवान श्रीकृष्ण मुझ पर प्रसन्न हों ।’ अपनी शक्ति के अनुसार श्रेष्ठ ब्राह्मण को काली गौ का दान करें । द्विजश्रेष्ठ ! विद्वान पुरुष को चाहिए कि वह तिल से भरा हुआ पात्र भी दान करे । उन तिलों के बोने पर उनसे जितनी शाखाएँ पैदा हो सकती हैं, उतने हजार वर्षों तक वह स्वर्गलोक में प्रतिष्ठित होता है । तिल से स्नान होम करे, तिल का उबटन लगाये, तिल मिलाया हुआ जल पीये, तिल का दान करे और तिल को भोजन के काम में ले ।’

इस प्रकार हे नृपश्रेष्ठ ! छ: कामों में तिल का उपयोग करने के कारण यह एकादशी ‘षटतिला’ कहलाती है, जो सब पापों का नाश करनेवाली है ।

**Sat-tila Ekadashi**

**from the Bhavishya-Uttara Puran**

Shree Dalbhya Rishi said to Palastya Muni, "When the spirit soul comes in contact with the material energy, he immediately begins to perform sinful activities, such as stealing, killing, and illicit sex. He may even perform many other terrible deeds, such as killing a Brahmin. Oh purest of personalities, please tell me how these unfortunate souls may escape the punishment of being sent to hellish regions of creation. Kindly inform me how, by giving even a little in charity, one may be easily released from the reactions of his sins."

Pulastya Muni replied, "Oh fortunate one, you have asked me an important and confidential question, which not even God Brahma, God Vishnu, God Shiv or God Indra has ever asked. Please listen very carefully to my answer. "With the arrival of the month of Magh (January - February), one should bathe, carefully control his senses by giving up lust, anger, pride, jealousy, faultfinding, and greed, and meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead Shree Krishn. One should follow the rules and regulations of Ekadashi, which I shall now explain to you.

"After bathing, the person who intends to observe Ekadashi should worship the Supreme God. While praying to Shree Krishn by chanting His holy name, he should promise to observe the Ekadashi fast. He should (try to if it is possible. If you cant then don’t. We as Hindus are not forced to do anything. What Shree Krsn is looking for is your faith) remain awake overnight and perform a hom (fire sacrifice – again if possible). Then the devotee should perform an Arati ceremony for the pleasure of the God - Who holds a conch, disk, club, and so on in His hands - offering Him sandalwood paste to his feet, incense, camphor, a bright ghee lamp, and delicious food preparations. Next the devotee should offer the 108 balls of cow dung, sesame seeds, and cotton wool into the sacred fire whilst chanting such holy names of the God as Purusha sukta, and other names. (Again this can be skipped if it is not possible). Throughout the whole day and night he should also observe the Ekadashi vrata (fast, which is a fast from all kinds of grains and beans). On this occasion one should offer the God pumpkin, coconut, and guava. If these items are unavailable, betel nut may be substituted.

"The devotee should pray to God Janardan, the benefactor of all living beings, in this way; 'Oh Shree Krishn, You are the most merciful Personality of Godhead and the giver of liberation to all fallen souls.  Oh God, we have fallen into the ocean of material existence. Please be kind to us. Oh lotus-eyed divinity, please accept our most humble, affectionate and respectful obeisance’s. Oh protector of the entire world, we offer You our humble respects again and again. Oh Supreme Spirit, Oh Supreme One, Oh source of all our forefathers, may You and Your eternal consort, Srimati Lakshmi-devi, please accept these humble offerings.'

"The devotee should then try to please a qualified Brahmin with a warm welcome, a pot full of water, an umbrella, a pair of shoes, and clothes (cloth - dhoti), (if it is possible to find a Brahmin) requesting him at the same time to bestow his blessings, by which one may develop unalloyed love for Shree Krishn. According to one's ability, one may also donate him a pot full of sesame seeds to such a Brahmin, particularly to one who is very well versed in all the injunctions of the Vedic scriptures.

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"Oh exalted Dalbhya Muni, black sesame seeds are especially suitable for formal worship and fire sacrifices while white or brown ones are meant to be eaten by a qualified Brahmin.One who can arrange to give both kinds of sesame seeds (black and white or brown) especially on this Sat-tila Ekadashi day will be promoted to at least the heavenly planets after leaving this present body, for as many thousands of years as the number of seeds that would be produced if the seeds he donated were sown in the ground and grew into mature, seed bearing plants.

"On this Ekadashi a faithful person should (1) bathe in the water mixed with sesame seeds, (2) rub sesame seed paste on his body, (3) offer sesame seeds into the fire in sacrifice, (4) eat sesame seeds, (5) give sesame seeds away in charity, (6) accept charitable gifts of sesame seeds. These are the six (sat) ways in which sesame seeds (tila) are utilised for spiritual purification on this Ekadashi. Therefore it is called Sat-tila Ekadashi.

"The great Deva Rishi Narada Muni once asked the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Shree Krishn, 'Oh mighty armed God, Oh You who are so affectionate to Your loving devotees, please accept my most humble obeisance’s. Oh Yaadav, kindly tell me the result one obtains by observing Sat-tila Ekadashi.' "Shree Krishn replied, 'Oh best of the twice born Brahmins, I shall narrate to you an account of an incident I personally witnessed. Long ago on earth there lived an old female brahmini who worshipped Me every day with controlled senses. She very faithfully observed many a fast, especially on special days honouring Me and served Me with full devotion, devoid of any personal motive. Her rigorous fasting made her quite weak and thin. She gave charity to brahmanas and to young maidens (kanyas), and even planned to give away her house in charity.  Oh best of the brahmanas although this spiritually minded woman gave charitable donations to worthy people, the odd feature of her austerity was that she never gave food to brahmanas or the devas.

"'I began to reflect on this curious omission:  "This fine woman has purified herself by fasting on all the auspicious occasions and by offering Me strict devotional worship.  Therefore she certainly has become eligible to enter My personal abode, which is unattainable by ordinary persons."  So I came down to this planet to examine her, disguising Myself as a follower of God Shiv's, complete with a garland of skulls draped around My neck and a begging pot (kumandalu) in My hand. "'As I approached her, she said to Me, "Oh respectful one, tell me truthfully why You have come before me." "'I replied, "Oh beautiful one, I have come to get some sacred alms from you" - whereupon she angrily threw a dense lump of mud into My begging pot!  Oh Narada Muni I simply turned around and went back to My personal abode, astonished at this fine Brahmani's peculiar mixture of great magnanimity and stinginess.

"'At last this austere lady reached the spiritual world in her self-same body, so great were her efforts at fasting and charity.  And because she had indeed offered Me a lump of mud, I transformed that mud into a beautiful home.  However, Oh Naradaji, this particular house was just like that mud completely devoid of any edible grains, as well as any furniture or ornamentation, and when she entered it she found only an empty structure.  She therefore approached Me and said with great anger, "I have fasted repeatedly on so many auspicious occasions, making my body weak and thin.  I have worshipped You and prayed to You in so many different ways for You are truly the master and protector of all the universes.  Yet despite all this there is no food or wealth to be seen in my new home, Oh Janardan, please tell me.  Why is this?"

"'I replied, "Please return to your house.  Sometime later the wives of the devas will pay you a visit out of curiosity to see the new arrival, but do not open your door until they have described to you the glories and importance of Sat-tila Ekadashi."

"'Hearing this, she returned to her house.  Eventually the devas' wives arrived there and in unison said, "Oh beautiful one, we have come to have your darshan.  Oh auspicious one, please open the door to your house and let us see you. "'The lady replied, "Oh most dear ones, if you want me to open this door, you will have to describe to me the merit one obtains by observing the sacred fast of Sat-tila Ekadashi."  But to this request, not even one of the wives responded. "'Later, however, they returned to the house, and one of the wives nicely explained the sublime nature of this sacred Ekadashi.  And when the lady at last opened her door, they saw that she was neither a Devi, a Gandharvi, a she-demon, nor even a Naga-patni.  She was simply an ordinary human lady.

"'From then on the lady observed Sat-tila Ekadashi, which awards ALL material enjoyment and liberation at the same time, as it has been described to her.  And she finally received the beautiful furnishings and grains she had expected for her home.  Moreover, her once ordinary material body was transformed into a beautiful spiritual form made of sac-cid-ananda (eternality, knowledge, and bliss), with a fine complexion.  So, by the mercy and grace of Sat-tila Ekadashi, both the lady and her new home in the spiritual world were at last radiantly splendid and lustrous with gold, silver, jewels, and diamonds.

"'Oh Naradaji, a person should not ostentatiously observe Ekadashi out of greed, with the hope of attaining wealth dishonestly.  Selflessly, he should simply donate sesame seed, clothes, and food according to his capacity, for by doing so he will achieve good health and exalted spiritual consciousness, birth after birth.  Ultimately, he will be given release from the bonds of this world (liberation) and admittance into the God's supreme abode will be his to enjoy.  That is my opinion, Oh best of the devas deva-rishis).'

"Oh Dalbhya Muni," Pulastya Rishi concluded, "one who properly observes this wonderful Sat-tila Ekadashi with great faith become free from all kinds of poverty - spiritual, mental, physical, social, and intellectual - as well as all kinds of ill luck and evil omens (sakun).  Indeed, following this Ekadashi fast by donating, sacrificing, or eating sesame seeds free one of all past sin, without a doubt. One need not wonder how this happens**.** The rare soul who properly performs these acts of charity in the right devotional mood, following the Vedic injunctions, will become utterly free of all sinful reactions and go back to Godhead, back home to the spiritual world."

Thus ends the narration of the glories of Sat-tila Ekadashi
from the sacred Bhavishya-Uttara Purana

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