

Significance of Shravan/Shraavana month

Śrāvaṇa (Sanskrit: श्रावण), (shraavan), (saavan) is the fifth month of the Hindu calendar. In India's national civil calendar, beginning in late July from the first day of the full moon and ending in the third week of August, the day of the next full moon. In lunar religious calendars, Śrāvaṇa begins on the new moon and is the fifth month of the year.

*** according to the Gujarati Vikram Samovar calendar which starts with the month of Kartik, the Shravan month for Gujaratis is the tenth month of the calendar.

This is also the 2nd month of *Varsha* (rainy) season. On Purnima or full moon day and during the course of the month the star 'Shravan' rules the sky; hence the month is called Shravan. This month is shrouded by several religious festivals and ceremonies and almost all the days of this month are auspicious.

The month of Shravana is very important for the entire sub-continent of India as it is connected to the arrival of the South-West monsoons. For many people, the month of Shraavana is a month of fasting. Many people will fast every Monday (Somwar) to Lord Shiva and/or every Tuesday (Mangalwar) to the Goddess Parvati. Fasting on Tuesdays of this month is known locally as "Mangala Gauri Vrat" though all days during the Shravan month are considered auspicious.

Shravana is considered to be a holy month in the Hindu calendar due to the many festivals that are celebrated during this time.

VARALAKSHMI VRATAM

This is a vrata which implies the worship of Goddess of wealth. The vrata is observed on the Friday immediately preceding the full moon day of the month of Shravan (August-September). Mahalakshmi is the embodiment of prosperity and auspiciousness. The glory of this vrata is narrated in Skanda Purana by Lord Shiva Himself. The worship of Mahalakshmi is performed by married ladies to obtain good progeny, and for the long life of the husband. Since Mahalakshmi, as Vidyalakshmi, bestows divine wisdom also, great prophets have worshipped her for success in their spiritual work.

Krishna Janmashtami

Krishna Janmashtami marks the birth of Lord Sri Krishna comes on the 8th day after the full moon and is celebrated with great pomp across the world, especially in the Vaishnava traditions.

Raksha Bandhan

Raksha Bandhan also called **Rakhi Purnima** or simply **Rakhi** in many parts of India and Nepal, is a Hindu religious and secular festival. The festival signifies and celebrates the bond between brothers and sisters. It is celebrated on Shraavana Poornima (Full Moon). In simple words, Raksha bandhan means "Bond of Protection".

Narali Poornima

In western India and parts of Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Goa Shraavana Poornima (full moon) day is celebrated as Narali Purnima. On this day, an offering of a coconut (naral in Marathi) is made to the sea, as a mark of respect to Lord Varuna, the God of the Sea. In the coastal regions of Maharashtra

i.e. Konkan, a coconut is offered to the sea for calming it down after the monsoon season. Narali Purnima marks the beginning of the fishing season and the fishermen, who depend on the sea for a living, make an offering to Lord Varuna so that they can reap bountiful fish from the sea. Fishermen start fishing in the sea after this ceremony.

Nag Panchami

Nag Panchami is also celebrated in many parts of India on the fifth day after Amavasya of Shraavana month. The snake god Nāga is worshiped. The last day of the Shraavana is celebrated as Pola, where the bull is worshiped by farmers from Maharashtra.

Basava Panchami

In Karnataka **Basava Panchami** is celebrated on 5th day after amavasya. In 1196 AD this day Lingayat dharma guru Basava merged with god.

Avani Avittam

In southern and central parts of India including Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Odisha, Shraavana Poornima day is when the Brahmin community performs the rituals of Avani Avittam or Upakarma.

Shri Baladeva birthday

Shraavana Poornima day is also celebrated as Shri Baladeva birth Ceremony. Lord Krishna's elder Brother Prabhu Balarama was born on this Poornima.

Gamha Purnima

Gamha Purnima is celebrated in Odisha. On this date, all the domesticated Cows and Bullocks are decorated and worshipped. Various kinds of country-made cakes called Pitha and sweets mitha are made and distributed within families, relatives and friends. In Oriya Jagannath culture, the lord Krishna & Radha enjoy the rainy season of Shravana starting from Shukla Pakhya Ekadashi (usually 4 days before Purnima) and ending on Rakhi Purnima with a festival called "Jhulan Yatra". Idols of Radha-Krishna are beautifully decorated on a swing called Jhulan, hence the name "Jhulan Yatra".

Kajari Purnima

In central parts of India such as Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand Shraavana Poornima day is celebrated as Kajari Purnima. It is an important day for the farmers and women blessed with a son. On the ninth day after Shravana Amavasya, the preparations of the Kajari festival start. This ninth day is called Kajari Navami and varied rituals are performed by women who have sons until Kajari Purnima or the full moon day.

Pavitropana

In parts of Gujarat, Shraavana Poornima day is celebrated as Pavitropana. On this holiday, people perform the grand pooja or the worship of Lord Shiva. It is the culmination of the prayers done throughout the year.

Pavitra Ekadashi

On Ekadashi Day [11th day], Vaishnavas in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan celebrate it as the birth of Pushtimarga, the path of grace. On this day, Lord Krishna appeared in front of Shri Vallabhacharya. Shri Vallabhacharya offered him a thread (soothan), which was pious (pavitra). Since that day every year, Pavitra Ekadashi is celebrated. Such threads are offered from Ekadashi till Raksha Bandhan.

Jandhyam Poornima

Jandhyam is Sanskrit for sacred thread, and Poornima denotes the full moon in Sanskrit. Jandhyala Purnima is observed on the full moon day (Poornima) in the month of Shraavan in Andhra Pradesh. Brahmins perform the sacred thread changing ceremony on this day and it is also known as Yajurveda Nutanasahitha Upakarma.

Shravani Mela

Shravani Mela is a major festival time at Deoghar in Jharkhand with thousands of saffron-clad pilgrims bringing holy water around 100 km on foot from the Ganges at Sultanganj, Bihar. Shraavan is also the time of the annual Kanwar Yatra, the annual pilgrimage of devotees of Shiva, known as *Kanwaria* make to Hindu pilgrimage places of Haridwar, Gaumukh and Gangotri in Uttarakhand to fetch holy waters of Ganges River Hindu saint Sri Guru Raghavendra Swami, who advocated Sri Madhvacharya's Dvaita philosophy, achieved Videha Mukti on Sraavana Bahula Dwitiya in 1671 AD.

Further Practices:

Devotees offer Patram-Pushpam and Falam-Toyam to Shiva Linga in Shraavan Maas

Shraavan month is synonymous with auspicious festivals and events. It is the best time to conduct all-important religious ceremonies, as almost all days in this month are auspicious for shubh arambh, i.e. good start. Shraavan maas' ruling deity is Lord Shiva.

In this month, each Monday is celebrated as Shraavan Somvar across all temples with the Dharanatra hanging over the Shiva Linga, bathing it with holy water and milk, throughout the day into the night. Devotees offer Bael leaves, flowers, holy water and milk, i.e. Falam-Toyam, Pushpam-Patram to Lord Shiva on every Shraavan Somwar, they fast until the sun goes down and the Nandadeep, the Akhand Diya, burns throughout.

The significance of Lord Shiva in Shraavan (Sawan) Month

The Samudra Manthan is a very important episode as per the Puranas. The churning of the milky ocean, i.e. Samudra Manthan in search of the amrit, took place during the month of Shraavan. During the churning, 14 different rubies emerged from the ocean. Thirteen rubies were divided among the devas and the asuras, however, Halahal, the 14th ruby remained untouched as it was the deadliest poison which could destroy the whole universe and every living being. Lord Shiva drank the Halahal and stored the poison in his throat. Due to the impact of the poison, his throat turned blue and he came to be called Neelkantha.

Such was the impact of the poison that Lord Shiva wore a crescent moon on his head and all the devas started offering water from the holy river of Ganges to lord Shiva to reduce the effects of the poison. Both these events took place in the Shravan Maas and therefore, it is considered very auspicious to offer holy Ganga water to Lord Shiva in this month.

Importance of wearing Rudraksh in Shravan Month

Devout devotees of Lord Shiva consider it auspicious to wear Rudraksha in the month of Shravam. Mondays are dedicated to Lord Shiva as his the ruling deity of the day. However, Mondays in the Shravan maas as known as Shravan Somwar and are highly auspicious, and celebrated with all austerities.

Rituals to following Shravan (Sawan) Month

Offering milk to Lord Shiva in Shravan Month leads one to earn a lot of punyas. Wear Rudraksha and use it for japas.

Bhibhuti is considered very important if offered to lord Shiva. Some of it should be smeared on the forehead as well.

Offer panchamrit (a mixture of milk, curd, butter or ghee, honey and jaggery) and bael leaves to Shiva Linga.

Chant the Shiva Chalisa and perform regular Aarti of Lord Shiva.

Chanting the Mahamritunjaya Mantra is very auspicious.

Fast on all Shravan Somvars. This is important for young women seeking good husbands.