



## “OVERVIEW OF CHANDRAYANA VRATA”

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### ABSTRACT

Chandrayana Vrata is derived from one of the ancient and scriptures which is arduous Vrata, which is very much praised in Sanatana Dharma. Theoretically, fifteen hand full of food should be taken in the full moon day and it should be reduced one hand full every day, so that on a new moon day it becomes a total fast. Again the food is increased one hand full every day, so that it becomes fifteen hand full on a full moon day.

Maharshi Patanjali tells “*Kayendriyasiddhih Ashuddhikshayat Tapasah*” [II 43], the purification of body along with sensory organs which are the parts of mind can be achieved by adopting proper Tapas – Austerity. The purpose of this study is to inform the people about the complete information about Chandrayana Vrata.

This Vrata also helps us to achieve inner peace along with physical and mental well-being which leads to our overall health improvement. A detailed analysis of this vrata can be used as a yogic therapy method in hospitals and in other setups.

**Key Words: Chandrayana, Vrata, Tapas**

### Introduction

Chandrayana Vrata is derived from one of the ancient and scriptures which is arduous Vrata, which is very much praised in Sanatana Dharma. There are many kinds of vrats in Sanatana Dharma. The most popular ones include the Shivratri Vrata, Purnima Vrata, Ekadashi Vrata, Dwadashi Vrata, Gayatri Vrata and the most powerful of them, Chandrayana Vrata. The way Lord Rudra is greatest among all Gods and Lord Shakti is greatest among all Goddesses, the way Sun is supreme among all planets and moon is supreme among all stars, the way water is supreme among all pancha tatva, the same way, the vrata of Chandrayana is supreme among all. This vrata lends hand to overcome one’s bad deeds and lays a path for attaining good deeds in the life ahead. This vrata also helps us to achieve inner peace along with physical and mental well-being which leads to our overall health improvement.

According to the traditional Hindu calendar, (Table 3.1) explained a month (maasa) is been divided in two pakshas (15 days each) namely shukla paksha (amavasya to next purnima) and Krishna paksha (purnima to

amavasya). Chandrayana vrata is carried out in a span of 30 days which starts from full moon day (purnima of Krishna Paksha) and ends on next full moon day (purnima of shukla paksha of the upcoming month). This span of thirty days completes one chandrayana cycle. The speciality of this vrata is its association with nature where the diet of a person moves in proportional to the size and the position of the moon (Chandra prabha). The influence of the moon on the human body decreases during the progression of Krishna paksha and gradually increases as the moon's cycle enters Shuklapaksha. In this regard, the postulates of the Vrata are designed in such a way that, the food taken will be in accordance to decrease and increase of chandras kala (moon cycle). In the mid of Vrata i.e. on the no moon day (amavasya) the sadhaka keeps his body away from food for the whole day by the following Ekantavasa, Mauna, and Upavasa. It must be taken with at most care that the complete diet followed in the course of Vrata be Vegetarian.

**(Table 3.1) Names of Thitis starting with Full Moon**

Day.	Phase.	Tithi.	Day.	Phase.	Tithi.
1.	Krishna.	Pratipada.	16.	Shukla.	Pratipada.
2.	Krishna.	Dvitiya.	17.	Shukla.	Dvitiya.
3.	Krishna.	Tritiya.	18.	Shukla.	Tritiya.
4.	Krishna.	Chaturthi.	19.	Shukla.	Chaturthi.
5.	Krishna.	Panchami.	20.	Shukla.	Panchami.
6.	Krishna.	Shashthi.	21.	Shukla.	Shashthi.
7.	Krishna.	Saptami.	22.	Shukla.	Saptami.
8.	Krishna.	Ashtami.	23.	Shukla.	Ashtami.
9.	Krishna.	Navami.	24.	Shukla.	Navami.
10.	Krishna.	Dasami.	25.	Shukla.	Dasami.
11.	Krishna.	Ekadasi.	26.	Shukla.	Ekadasi.
12.	Krishna.	Dwadasi.	27.	Shukla.	Dwadasi.
13.	Krishna.	Trayodasi.	28.	Shukla.	Trayodasi.
14.	Krishna.	Chaturdashi.	29.	Shukla.	Chaturdashi.
15.	Krishna.	Amavasya.	30.	Shukla.	Purnima.

Table 3.1 explains the waning phase of the moon's cycle (from Full Moon to New Moon) (called Krishna Paksha) and the waxing phase of the moon's cycle (from New Moon to Full Moon) (called Shukla Paksha) Coloums 3 and 6 discuss the various Thithis in terms of their Paksha.

#### **Nine parts of Chandrayana Vrata :**

- 1) Vrata
- 2) Japa
- 3) Chandrayan Aahaar Vidhana
- 4) Daana
- 5) Sandhya Vandana
- 6) Arghya arpana
- 7) Puja
- 8) Yogic Practices
- 9) Upasana of the divine

## Aim of Chandrayana Vrata :

The main aim of a sadhaka performing Chandrayana Vrata is to attain sacrament. Among the different vrathas mentioned in the Indian scriptures, Chandrayana Vrata is considered as most sacred as it helps in washing away all the sins. It is said that one Chandrayana Vrata can wash away all the sins of one birth. The word “Prayaschita” is used in this regard where the word splits into two prayah and schita. Prayah refers to sins and schita refers to penance or sacrament. In a nutshell, Chandrayana Vrata is a kind of vrata to perform prayaschita which washes away all the sins and clear the body, mind and soul.

## Method of Chandrayana Vrata practice:

As mentioned above chandrayana system follows the system of variation of food chart of a sadhaka in a complete cycle.

The important rules followed in Cv as follows:

- A sadhaka should consume the prescribed quantity of food, once a day (except for shishu chandrayana, expaline in the upcoming section).
- The quantity of the food to be consumed measured in grasa. One grasa equals to the size of a peacock's egg or one medium-sized Amla fruit. It is also called “pinda” Or “Tuttu” which means the quantity of food that holds the feast of the sadhaka.
- Accordingly, in a total Chandrayana cycle, a sadhaka consumes 240 grasa in a span of 30 days.
- The khichdi in this Vrata is prepared according to the convenience of place and time using rice, wheat or jowar etc. Any extra additives with flavours the food with sweet, salt, sour, bitter, spice, astringent is strictly avoided.
- The food should be consumed only after yogic practice like Asana, pranayama, meditation, Yoga Nidra sequentially.
- The consumption of food is done in parallel with the chant of Vedic mantras, as mentioned below:

1. ॐ भूः नमः स्वाहा ।
2. ॐ भुवः नमः स्वाहा ।
3. ॐ स्वः नमः स्वाहा ।
4. ॐ महः नमः स्वाहा ।
5. ॐ जनः नमः स्वाहा ।
6. ॐ तपः नमः स्वाहा ।
7. ॐ सत्यं नमः स्वाहा ।
8. ॐ यशः नमः स्वाहा ।
9. ॐ श्रीः नमः स्वाहा ।
10. ॐ अर्कं नमः स्वाहा ।
11. ॐ ईटं नमः स्वाहा ।
12. ॐ ओजः नमः स्वाहा ।
13. ॐ तेजः नमः स्वाहा ।
14. ॐ पुरुषं नमः स्वाहा ।
15. ॐ शिवः नमः स्वाहा ।

Note: On the first day, since the sadhaka will be eating 15 Grasa and all the 15 mantras mentioned below will be used. On Krishna pratipada, the sadhaka will be eating 14 grasa, hence, he must utilise only the first 14 mantras. Then the same for 3rd, 4th, 5th days. Thus, this way, on the Krishna chaturdashi, the sadhaka will utilise only the first mantra as he will be eating only 1 grasa. On Amavasya one must stay Nirahara. On Shukla paksha

pratipada, amount of food will be gradually increased which ends with 15 grasa with 15 mantra on the next full moon day.

### **The time of Chandrayana Vrata practice:**

The Hindu calendar comprises of 12 months in a year which is called as chandramana masas. Among all the months shravana and karthika masa is considered as most sacred. This is well discussed in skanda and padma purana where it is said that the Chandrayana Vrata performed during greeshma and sharad rutu (season) is considered to have the highest impact. In general, chandrayana can be practiced at any time in a year.

### **Types of Chandrayana Vrata :**

Chandrayana Vrata is performed in four different modes namely Yava Madhya Chandrayana, Pipilika Madhya Chandrayana, Yathi Chandrayana, Shishu Chandrayana.

**Yava Madhya Chandrayana :** In Sanskrit, Yava refers to the word wheat. As the dimensions of wheat are seen as swollen at the centre and pointed at the edges, the pattern of this vrata follows the same. It starts with amavasya with no food (zero grasa) in the beginning, reached the maximum food (15 grasa) in between (purnima) and ends with no food on the last day as it reaches the next amavasya.

**Pipilika Madhya Chandrayana :** In Sanskrit literature, the word “Pipilika” refers to ‘Ant’. The shape of ant’s body is seen as swollen in the ends with thin in the centre. Similarly, in this vrata the diet pattern follows the shape of the ant where it starts with 15 grasa of food on a full moon day (Purnima) and reaches 0 grasa on the day of amavasya. Thereafter the amount of food will be gradually increased which ends with 15 grasa on the next full moon day (Purnima).

**Yathi Chandrayana :** Yati in Sanskrit refers to Rishi or sages. This vrata follows the diet pattern of sages. In Indian philosophy, it is observed that sages consume the least food and were believers of the philosophy “simple living high thinking”. In this vrata, 8 grasa of food are taken at the middle of every day (noon) which start from purnima and ends up with the same diet till the next full moon day.

**Shishu Chandrayana :** The word shishu is used in many Indian languages which of the meaning of a child. This Chandrayana Vrata is practiced on the basis of convenience for performing the Vrata and the diet pattern is designed accordingly. This Vrata is practiced by dividing the food to be consumed into two major portions where 4 grasa are consumed in the morning and remaining 4 grasa in the evening. As seen earlier this Chandrayana Vrata commences on full moon day (purnima) and ends with the next full moon day (purnima) with complete fasting on the day of amavasya.

The adults are capable of adjusting their body and state of minds to the increasing and decreasing pattern of food diet system in parallel to the moon can opt for Yava madhya Chandrayana Vrata and Pipilika Madhya Chandrayana Vrata For the ones whose body is not capable of the food, variations can opt for Shishu or Rishi Chandrayana Vrata.

Note: In any type of Chandrayana Vrata, on the day of amavasya a sadhaka practices complete fasting.

**Lifestyle followed during Chandrayana Vrata:**

- It is very important that sadhaka maintains his internal and external purity during the course of the Vrata. This is related to the sacrament of his/her body, mind and soul which helps in washing away all the sins and attaining penance.
- It is advised that the sadhaka must take bath twice or thrice daily. Sandhya vandan (a ritual performed at dawn and dusk), self-study, poojas, chanting mantras and good spiritual practices should be regularly practiced.
- During Chandrayana Vrata one should sleep on the plain and clean floor on a grass mat.
- A sadhaka performing Chandrayana Vrata should strictly follow celibacy or brahmacharya.
- The daily activities are performed in a clean and hygienic room or space.
- During Chandrayana Vrata one has to be calm and peaceful in his behaviour to attain inner peace and serenity.

**Benefits of Chandrayana Vrata:**

- This vrata brings good discipline in the lifestyle of a sadhaka where learns good deeds, maintains hygiene and attains good health.
- Chandrayana Vrata helps the sadhak to attain internal and external purity. This helps in improving one's innate immunity and helps in keeping mind stable.
- In recent years, the lifestyle of humans involves a hectic schedule which leads to stress, depression, irregular food habits, which intern changes the lifestyle and other elements. This phenomenon is increasing day by day, which is the main reason for the damage to internal and external peace. In order to fight these issues, Chandrayana Vrata plays an important role in helping to attain one's penance.
- The ones who perform Chandrayana Vrata at least once in his/her lifetime will achieve atonement, which will help in washing away all the sins and make one pure from within.
- According to the Gowthama rishi, a person who performs Chandrayana Vrata twice in his life will help to attain penance or sacrament, for not only for this birth but also for ten births before and after.
- It is noted that one who performs Chandrayana Vrata will attain a unique attraction and charisma within him.
- The one who performs Chandrayana Vrata overcomes failure, sorrow, misery, pain, weakness and remains a good person. It is believed he can never commit a mistake and stands as an inspiration to the entire world.
- The Lifespan of a person and facial glow automatically increases.
- For a person who is in the stage of 'grahasta' in his life, Chandrayana Vrata is best suitable vrata for him.
- Since Chandrayana Vrata is very difficult to perform the person who has opted for this Vrata will attain more spiritual strength and at most concentration.

**Limitations of Chandrayana Vrata:**

- One whose lifestyle involves a lot of physical work should not perform this Vrata.
- The one whose immune system is compromised should not be performing this Vrata.

- Children, pregnant and breastfeeding women should not perform this Vrata.

### **Impact of the moon on the human body:**

Numerous studies are going on across the globe by different scientists who strongly believe in the influence of the moon upon the human body at a physical level. There are certain factors that connect the moon's energy to the human mind and body. Ancient Hindu texts say that the first three layers of the human body is a product of the earth and has qualities defined by the nine planets among which moon and sun play an important role. It is interesting to know that moon's energy has a direct connection with the menstrual cycle. The term "menses" is derived from Latin and Greek which means month (menses) and moon (mene) respectively. In ancient civilizations, menstrual cycles are seen as big events and there are some civilizations that drew calendar according to the menstrual cycles. It is observed that Indian culture is much connected with the moon's cycle as all the Hindu religious festivals are decided with the moon's phases.

An experiment was conducted by the Switzerland University of Basel to study the impact of the moon on human sleep. Few people (unaware of this experiment) were made to sleep in the darkroom in a 3, 5 day including the full moon day. They were 33 in number. Their subject was "Lunar Influence in the Sleep". They found remarkable changes in the sleeping pattern during the full moon day.

What they noticed is a decrease in sleep which is not that healthy for a human body. The conclusion is that lunar rhythm can impact the sleeping pattern of a human being. Those who work closely with emergencies like emergency room (ER) personnel, fire-fighters, paramedics and police officers, will share many stories regarding emergency with a full moon connection. There are known stories for breathing problem connected with full moons. Yet, there is no such clear evidence for the impact of the moon on the human body.

According to the research carried out by Indian Journal of Basic and Applied Medical Research, our heart beats faster on new and full moon days, especially when we are working out. The heart pumps blood and Moon raises the fluid activity in our body. Journal of Urology says that Kidney issues can be increased during the full moon phase. More patients are admitted due to urological reasons during the full moon phase. The impact of Moon on the body is yet to be proved and that should be done. All the ancient beliefs show how close they were with nature.

### **Importance of Full and New Moon.**

Purnima refers to the Full moon day which divides the month into 2 equal lunar fortnights (Called Paksha). This day is considered as very auspicious to start any work, business, etc. Purnima is also called Pournima or Purnima. The fortnight before Purnima is called Shukla Paksha and fortnight after is called Krishna Paksha.

Amavasya refers to the new moon night and it marks the first night of the first quarter of the Lunar month. As per Hindu mythology, during the period of Amavasya, it's the demonic or the evil powers that rule the earth and hence no auspicious activity should be started on this day. It's the ideal period to perform activities related to black magic/ Tantra Mantra etc and worshipping our dead ancestors/forefathers. Astrologers

recommend that no new activity should be started on Amavasya. Also, non-vegetarian food should not be eaten because the digestive power of the body is weak on Amavasya.

## Conclusion:

According to yoga, the phases of moon influence the emotions of the person. If one adopts “chandrayana vrata”, taking the food by synchronizing the phases of the moon according to individual’s body conditions, then one can be used to remove the darkness and dullness of the whole health and thereby making the individual too bright as the full moon. Therefore if one adopts “chandrayana vrata” it can destroy the impurities of the body and mind and can help one to attain and maintain the perfect health.

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