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### Shattila Ekadashi



Shattila Ekadashi, also known as Sattila Ekadashi or Tilda Ekadashi, is observed usually in the month of January during the waning phase of the moon. Dedicated to Lord Vishnu, Shattila Ekadashi is performed on the 11th day in the month of Magh, in North India and Paush, in other regions, as per the traditional Hindu calendar. The name Sat-Tila has been derived from 'til' which means sesame seeds which are donated to the poor and hungry. The devotees also consider it highly auspicious to bath in water mixed with sesame seeds. They also offer oblations by mixing water with sesame seeds to their dead ancestors. An interesting story lies behind the observance of the Shattila Ekadashi fasting.

#### Shattila Ekadashi Vrat

A religious and devoted rich woman performed all the Ekadashi vrats unflinchingly. She fed the poor and Brahmins heavily with clothes, jewelry and various other items, the exception being food and grains. Once, Lord Krishna appeared disguised as a poor mendicant wearing torn clothes begging for food on Shattila Ekadashi day. The rich woman agreed to give food but only after the mendicant mentioned his gothra. Nonetheless, the mendicant continued to beg for food. Angrily, the rich woman placed a rolled ball of clay in the begging pot of the mendicant. He blessed her and left.

To the woman's surprise when she went indoors to have her food, all the food items that she had cooked turned into clay. Even the fruits, rice and vegetables had become clay. Hence, the woman became hungry and started turning pale over the days and years. She grew weaker and weaker. With all the wealth in her hand, she could not get food for herself. She began praying to Lord Krishna for repentance and soon, the Lord appeared in her dreams. He then brought to the knowledge of the woman that the biggest danam is Anna Danam, or feeding the hungry, which she had been ignoring.



He further informed that by performing Sattila Ekadashi, she would be relieved of her all miseries. While performing this ritual, she donated til (sesame) seeds to all the poor and hungry that arrived at her door. Eventually, all the food items turned back to their original forms. Thereafter, the woman kept her doorways open for any hungry passing by her way. Thus, since then, Sattila Ekadashi is practiced continuously on the pretext of redeeming one's sins. While observing the Shattila Ekadashi vrat, foods made from rice and grains are avoided while the other Ekadashi fasting rules apply to this day as well. Some devotees even eat sesame seeds as part of the vrat.

- [History](#)
- [Aims](#)
- [Concept](#)
- [Parenting](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Training Programmes](#)
  - October 11
  - December 09
- [Expansion](#)
- [Development](#)
- [Syllabus](#)
- [Bal Vikas Administration](#)
- [Past Students](#)
  - [June 2010](#)
  - [September](#)
- [Home](#)

#### Activities from States

[At the Lotus Feet](#)[Gurus Corner](#)[Children's Corner](#)[From the Annals of the World History](#)[Special Page](#)[Glory of Bharath](#)