



Samba Dashami is a unique ritual observed on the 10th day during the *Shukla Paksha* or waxing phase of moon in *Paush* month (December – January) as per traditional Oriya calendar. This festival is especially celebrated in the eastern part of Orissa. This year



Samba Dasami ritual is going to be observed on 27th, Sunday in the month of December.

Orissa has a good deal of well-known tradition of *Oshas*, *Bratas* and *Melas*. The ceremony and sanctity of these traditional religious festivities are unparalleled. Every festival has some distinct rituals associated with it.

Samba Dasami: Legend



In Orissa it is said that 13 *Oshas* and *Bratas* are observed in 12 months as per traditional Oriya calendar. Every festival has a legend which talks of some social significance. Legends of *Samba Dasami Brata Katha* say that **Samba**, was the son of Lord Sri Krishna.

Once he was affected by leprosy disease. In order to get rid of this deadly disease, **Samba** performed a severe penance of 12 years for **Surya Bhagwan** (Sun God) and was cured immediately. From that day **Samba Dasami** ritual is observed in every Oriya family of Orissa. Particularly, on this day mothers perform *Surya Puja* to please **Surya Bhagawan** to keep their children healthy.

Rituals of Samba Dasami

On this day, female folks of the family wake up early in the morning before sun rise. After bath, they prepare variety of food items like, *Khichdi*, *Udiya Puli*, *Ghadghadia Tarkari* (a curry item) and offer them to Sun God during sun rise. One of the specific characters of this ritual is variety of individual food item is offered to Sun God in the name of each member of the family, especially children.



After that female folks of the families go on preparing variety of *Pitha* (Cake) like; *Manda Pitha*, *Kakara Pitha*, *Arisha Pitha*, *Biri Ladoo* and other items like *Makar Chaula*, *Chhenaguda*, *Dhanu Mukaan*, sweet dishes like *Khiri*, *Rasagola*, *Jhilli*, *Chhenagaja*,

Sweet Curd etc. all over the day. In the noon time, a bowl of turmeric water with a beetle in it is taken to '*chaura mula*' (a small temple like

structure with a Tulsi plant overhead). All the cooked foods are served in plates. Then female heads of the family see the face of Sun God through the bowl of turmeric water and offer all the cuisine to the God. They read the legend of '*Samba Dasami Brata Katha*' and pray for the well-being of the whole family members.



In the late night or evening, another *puja* is observed as a part of *Samba Dasami* ritual. This is known as '*Mahakala Puja*'. Special *Budha Chakuli* and *Ghadghadia Tarkari* (an item prepared with fish, variety of *Dal* and other vegetables) are offered to **Jama** God. Along with all these rituals from early morning to late night, *Samba Dasami* puja is observed in Orissa.

The get-together on such occasions implies a lot to the people of Orissa. This amounts to a greater cultural unity.