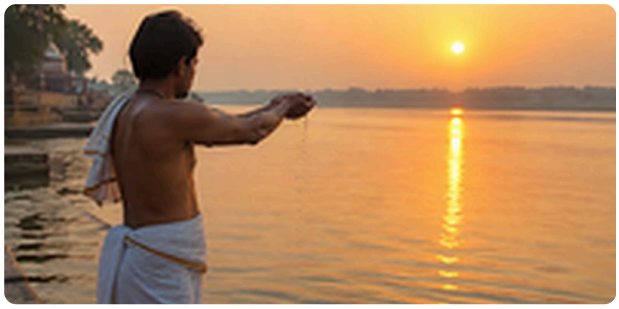
# Maha Shivaratri at Home

**Saturday 6 March 2027**

Short puja: about 30 minutes



Maha Shivaratri is the night Shiva is worshipped with water, milk and bilva leaves. Many people fast during the day and stay awake through the night with chanting, stories and four rounds of puja, one in each quarter of the night.

## What you need

- Bilva leaves (frozen or dried at Indian stores) or tulsi
- Milk, curd, honey, ghee and sugar for abhisheka
- White flowers
- Vibhuti (sacred ash)
- Fruit and fasting foods
- Ghee lamps for the four puja times

## Before the puja

- Clean the puja place and take a bath; wear fresh clothes.
- Set out a lamp, incense, flowers, turmeric, kumkum, rice and water.
- Read the story to the family before you begin.

## Short puja, step by step

1. **Light the lamp** and say the lamp prayer, then pray to Ganesha.
2. **Sankalpa and fast.** In the morning, take a bath and resolve to fast (fruit, milk or one simple meal) and to keep the night.
3. **Abhisheka.** Bathe a small Shiva linga in order with water, milk, curd, honey, ghee and sugar water, then water again, chanting all the while.
4. **Bilva offering.** Offer bilva leaves (three joined leaves), white flowers and vibhuti.
5. **Four night pujas.** Repeat a short abhisheka and aarti in each of the four quarters of the night (around 7 pm, 10 pm, 1 am and 4 am). Families with children can do one or two.
6. **Break the fast.** The next morning, after a bath and puja, break the fast with prasada.
7. **Arati.** Wave the lamp, ask forgiveness for anything missed and share the prasada.

## Prayers to chant

शुभं करोति कल्याणम् आरोग्यं धनसम्पदः । शत्रुबुद्धिविनाशाय दीपज्योतिर्नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

I bow to the light of the lamp, which brings goodness, health and wealth, and removes harmful thoughts.

वक्रतुण्ड महाकाय सूर्यकोटि समप्रभ । निर्विघ्नं कुरु मे देव सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदा ॥

O Lord with the curved trunk, shining like a million suns, remove the obstacles from all my work, always.

ॐ नमः शिवाय ॥

Salutations to Shiva.

त्रिदलं त्रिगुणाकारं त्रिनेत्रं च त्रियायुधम् । त्रिजन्मपापसंहारम् एकबिल्वं शिवार्पणम् ॥

I offer one three-leaved bilva to Shiva, which removes the wrongs of three lives.

ॐ त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् । उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय माऽमृतात् ॥

We worship the three-eyed Shiva; may he free us from death as a ripe cucumber falls from the vine, and lead us to the immortal.

ॐ प्राणाय स्वाहा । ॐ अपानाय स्वाहा । ॐ व्यानाय स्वाहा । ॐ उदानाय स्वाहा । ॐ समानाय स्वाहा ॥

Offering the food to the five breaths of life.

यानि कानि च पापानि जन्मान्तरकृतानि च । तानि तानि विनश्यन्ति प्रदक्षिण पदे पदे ॥

With every step around the altar, may all past wrongs fall away.

## With children

- Make a bilva-leaf garland in paper: Bilva leaves grow in threes. Cut many sets of three leaf shapes joined at the stalk.
- Tell the story of Maha Shivaratri before the puja.

A simple home guide from VedaVidesh. Every family and region has its own customs, so follow yours where they differ, and check a local panchanga for the exact time in your city. Dates are for India; abroad they can differ by a day. Members also get the full puja with every mantra.