



श्री लक्ष्मी नारायण मन्दिर



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HINDI NAVA VARSA – NEW YEAR

The Hindi New Year, also called **Nava Samvat**, commences on the first day of the **Chaitra** month, **Shukla Paksha** that heralds the bright fortnight of the lunar month. It is the 15-day period when the moon is waxing, leading to the **Poornamasi** (full moon).

As the first day of the New Year it assumes great auspiciousness, being observed religiously with pomp and colourful festivities. It is an occasion for thanksgiving to God as Creator and Sustainer. The devotee prays for a successful and prosperous new year for all.

Hindus have celebrated the New Year from the remotest past as is evident from the ancient Vedic writings. The **Atharva Veda** (3.9.10) states,

May the Paramatma whom we conceive also as the Eternity of Time (**kala**), endow us with long life and prosperity.

Again the **Brahma Purana** refers to the origin of the universe in the following words,

On the first day of the month of Chaitra, Lord Brahma created the material universe.

Thus according to Hindu tradition and calculation, creation is far older than western theories claim.

The **Smriti Kaustubha** says,

On the first day of Chaitra month, during Satya Yuga, Bhagawan Vishnu incarnated as the Matsya Avatar which is described in detail in the Srimad Bhagavatam.

From the above references it is evident that many of our historical, cultural and religious traditions are inextricably linked with the Nava Varsa.

The New Year day in the month of **Chaitra** marks the beginning of the first Navaratri period in the year, culminating on the ninth day called **Naumi** when **Bhagawan Sri Ram** appeared in the **Treta Yuga**. It is observed as a special time, auspicious for prayer, fasting, **japa**, and other spiritual activities.

The numbering of the year in any civilisation or nation is generally based on some close association with events significant to the community. For example the birth of **Gautama Buddha**, the birth of **Jesus Christ**, the assassination of **Julius Caesar**, the reign of **Vikramaditya** etc. Each passing year is reckoned from that particular happening. In this way the **Samvat** is calculated from the time of the illustrious Hindu King **Vikramaditya** 2070 years ago; from the birth of Christ the present year is about 2013; the **Kaliyuga** year, calculated from the departure of **Bhagawan Sri Krishna** in the **Dvapara Yuga**, is 5113.

It would be appropriate, as we are dealing with the passing of the years from the beginning of creation, to throw light on the succession of **Yugas**. The **Yugas** occur in a cycle, just like the seasons. According to the **Srimad Bhagavat Gita** (ISKCON, page 428), **Satya Yuga** is 1 728 000 years duration, **Treta Yuga** 1 296 000 years, **Dvapara Yuga** 864 000 years and **Kali Yuga** (in which we are now living) 432 000 years. The total of the four **Yugas** makes one **Mahayuga**. Our scriptures say that we are now experiencing the 28th **Kaliyuga**. So by the end of the 28th **Kali Yuga**, the time that has lapsed with the passing of the **Yugas**, 120 960 000 years will have passed from creation.

This year 2013, the New Year falls on 11 April, which is also the beginning of **Navaratri** and **Ramayana** Week. The **Nava Varsa** is celebrated with prayers, fasting, the singing of bhajans and kirtans, reading of scriptures and feasting (consisting of **satvic** food). The giving of **dana (gifts)** is also prescribed on this auspicious occasion.

May the **Nava Varsa** bring all people happiness, good health and prosperity. May we always remain culturally and religiously awake.

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