

## YUGAADI (A Celebration of the Hindu year beginning)

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Yugaadi is a very important festival as it is the beginning of the new year (Samvatsara) as per the Hindu calendar. The earth's rotation around the Sun every year represents one complete cycle. The beginning of the rotation is referred from this festival. This also represents a new beginning for all efforts. It is a faith that however one spends that day will influence the forth-coming year. Thus everyone should spend that day in peace and joy through spiritual, religious and cultural activities. In the words of Sriranga Sadguru, a yogi-seer, "The planetary positions are favorable to spiritual advancement on these special festivals and one should make use of that timing". Also, the planet of the day of Yugaadi will be the planet of that year. The major activities to be done on that day are:

1. Special bath: A special oil bath in the early morning has to be taken. This will not only provide health but also helps to begin the day with other religious and spiritual activities. New clothes need to be worn that day.
2. Home decoration: The home is to be decorated with special leaves at the door and rangoli.
3. Taking oath (samkalpa): One should remember God and make a willful determination to carry out spiritually elevating work.
4. Devata Pooja: The daily pooja has to be carried out on this day with special feelings and worshipping the God as the Lord and Controller of the time.
5. Homa: A homa with fire as the representative of all Gods can be carried out so that all the activities of the year will be like an offering to the God.
6. Listening to Panchanga: A panchanga (traditional Hindu calendar) has to be read by a learned person (purohita). The panchanga has details regarding Tithi (refers to the motion of moon), Vara (refers the seven planetary days), Nakshtra (refers to 27 stars), Yoga (refers to the union of solar and lunar time reference) and Karaana (refers to sub-division of tithi). The listening to panchanga will help in knowing upcoming picture of the year.
7. Charity: The act of giving by remembering God will help the person spiritually. One should give with joy whatever one can afford to the needy and the community.
8. Special Prasadam. The special prasadam on Yugaadi is a mixture of jaggery (refers to sweet things in life) and neem leaves (refers to bitter things in life). In addition to this, several special dishes are prepared. The meaning of the prayer to be recited is "The neem leaves with jaggery is eaten for the healthy long life, for all the prosperities and removing all bad and negative things in life"

"Shatayurvajradehaaya Sarvasampatkaraaya cha  
Sarvaarishtha Vinashaaya Nimbakadala Bhakshanam

**Best Wishes for the new year "JAYA" Samvatsara" (2014-15)**