

# NEW YEAR 2018 - TALK OF ACARYAJI

Jan 1, 2018 anaikatti



At the outset, I wish you a very Happy New year 2018. This day we are celebrating, marks the beginning of the year. We have so many New Year days- we have one New Year day on April 14, we have Ugadi, Chaitra *shukla paksha pratipada* which comes around the first week of April and in Gujarat *Kartika masa pratipada* is called New Year day. This first January is another New Year day.

Any of these days we can celebrate any one or each of these days as a New Year day. Puja Swamiji beautifully says we require such days. We have a new beginning as it were because human being want some change to start afresh. Therefore a day like this becomes important for all of us. This New Year day is called कालपर्व.

*Parva* means a day or a period of time which is commemorating the beginning or end of some event. Etymologically speaking पिपर्ति इति पर्व- that which fills up. A particular day which fills up our life with some enthusiasm or with some spiritual or religious fervour is called *parva*, a festival day. We have various types of *parva* –

- दिव्यपर्व (*divya parva*) - festival day associated with a celestial phenomenon. Like *Makara Sankranti* is commemorating the sun entering into a particular *makara rashi*.
- देवपर्व (*deva parva*) - A day associated with some particular *devata*. Like *ekadasi*, *pradosam*, etc.

- मानवपर्व (*manav parva*) - a day associated with some social occasion like harvesting day celebrated in different states, or a day associated with a particular happening in an individual's life like someone's birthday or wedding day, birth of a child, etc.
- वनस्पतिपर्व (*vanapasti parva*)- A day associated with some particular plant. Like *tulasi vivaha* in *Kartika masa*, *ashwatha puja*, etc.
- प्राणिपर्व (*prani parva*)- festival day associated with some animals. Like *nAgapancami* when we worship the snake, *gopAshtami* when we worship cows.
- जयन्तिपर्व (*jayanti parva*) - a day associated with birthday of some *devata*, *avatara* or of some great people
- राष्ट्र पर्व (*rashtra parva*) - a day associated with one's country like Independence day, Republic day, etc.

Thus there are many types of *parvas* to commemorate various occasions. Today we are celebrating कालपर्व (*kala parva*) - a day of celebration associated with time.

There is a debate going up in social media as to whether we should celebrate this New Year day since it is not our Indian New Year day. But this controversy is not necessary.

Kalidasa says -उत्सवप्रियाः खलु मनुष्याः – human beings indeed like to celebrate. We just need a reason to celebrate. We are using the English calendar and are so much familiar with - January, February, etc much less than *hindu masa*, *tithi* etc. So there is nothing wrong in celebrating this New Year day and we can also celebrate our *Ugadi*, *vishu*, *pratipada* . Like sometimes we celebrate our birthday twice- calendar date and *nakshatra* day and get chocolate twice. So we need not have any resistance to celebrating this New Year day. Somebody has written a beautiful *sloka* on this particular point-

न भारतीयो नववत्सरोऽयम् । तथापि सर्वस्य शिवप्रदः स्यात् ।  
यतो धरित्री निखिलैव माता । ततः कुटुम्बायितमेव विश्वम् ॥

It says, this is **not an Indian New Year day. Still let it be auspicious for everybody. Since whole earth is our mother. For us the whole world is our family.**

Therefore we do not mind in joining others in celebrating New Year day. It is one more *kala parva* for us and *Bhagavan* says- कालः कलयतामहम् (*kala kalayatam aham*) - BG ch10,v. 30.

Thus we have one more day to appreciate and welcome *Bhagavan* as *kala tattvam* and express our gratitude . On this day we wish by saying- **“I wish you a Happy New Year”**.

We can look at the significance of the words- **“I wish you a Happy new Year”**.

- New Year means the year which is now starting, 2018 . There are any number of New Years
- As Pujya Swamiji said - We require such a day when we start afresh because we always have this feeling that things are not going well, when will it change ? I want to start afresh. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella wrote a book titled- Hit refresh. The title conveys this spirit. The significance of the word New Year is that it is a day that gives us an opportunity to start afresh.

• The words – “I wish you (a Happy New Year)” indicates that I cannot be happy ignoring other’s happiness. I wish you and everybody to be happy. This is one of the important teachings of *sastra*. This teaching we find in Bhagavad Gita as well.

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वं किल्बिषैः । BG Ch..3 verse 3. Partaking what is left over after *yagna* , noble people become free from unfavourable invisible results of action.

After sharing our resources, we enjoy. Means we include other's happiness in our happiness.

भुञ्जते ते त्वघ्नं पापाः ये पचन्त्यात्म कारणात् IBG ch.3 verse 3

Those who are self-centered, not thinking of others happiness, who want to be happy at the cost other's happiness, they are eating (collecting ) *papam*. When gross selfishness is there in life, *papam* is bound to be there. Therefore it is important to consider others' happiness . I wish a happy New Year indicates this particular attitude that throughout the year I will not ignore other's happiness, but include others well-being in my happiness.

When I say- “**I wish**”- I have to be really genuine about it. It should come out from my heart. I really wish the person happiness. So along with the wish, there can be prayer for that person also.

So I pray to the Lord and chant some mantra related to lord with the attitude that this day whom-so-ever I wish happiness, let that wish be fulfilled. I wish myself a Happy New Year and happy New Year to other people too.

**The question is how can my New Year be happy and how I can make this New Year a happy one for others?**

One who remains unhappy constantly, cannot contribute to other's happiness. A happy person is likely to make others happy. A sad person will spread sadness only.

So let me discover how I can make my New Year 2018 happy. Everybody wants to be happy. Everybody wants to make the New Year a happy one. How can I make it so?

I can make my year happy, by making everyday a happy day. Everyday can be happy, by making every hour a happy hour. Every hour can be a real happy hour, if every experience is a happy experience. Because a unit of life is an experience. Our entire life is consisting of experiences. So if my every experience, more or less is a happy experience , then every hour will be happy hour and every day will be a happy day and whole year will be a happy year.

**The question is how to make my every experience a happy experience?**

First of all we discover this fact that the quality of experience is not predominantly decided by what happens to us, but it is decided by how we respond to the experience. In other words, what is my attitude towards the happening decides the quality of my experience. If my attitude is proper, my experience will be a happy experience, a fulfilling experience. Therefore, predominantly the quality of my experience is decided by my attitude to every happening in my life. This is the first fact we discover. Then we stop blaming everybody, saying - " Because of this person my whole day is ruined today". All this blaming will not be there. My happiness is predominantly decided by my attitude. If attitude is changed, quality of experience will change.

### **The question is how to get proper attitude?**

Any attitude is cultivated predominantly by having right understanding. Some attitudes are inborn, some come from family background. But most of the attitudes we need to cultivate by having right understanding. Any attitude is abiding, sustaining when it is based on right understanding. If you have right understanding, right attitude then your experience will be a happy, a fulfilling experience.

### **What is the right understanding which makes our experience happy and fulfilling?**

Certain facts we need to keep in our mind which constitute right understanding.

1. First part of that understanding is - facts cannot be changed. In fact that which cannot be changed is a fact. Like suppose somebody shouted at me today at 9.22 am. That is an empirical fact that cannot be changed. Many people react, resist to this fact of happening.

Now something can be done about it. One option you have is you shout back which is what we generally do. Or we can see why that person shouted at me. There must be some pressure or I might have given some reason for that person to react. Is there anything to be corrected from my side? Rather than resisting to the fact, we make every fact of our life which is in the form of various happenings a learning experience. Pujya swamiji would say- if you make every experience a learning experience, then you are never a loser because you have learnt something from that experience. So first of all I understand that facts cannot be changed.

2. Similarly I understand that I cannot change people. Most of the time we lose our happiness because we want people to be different. Pujya swamiji emphasised this point very much. He would say- “ **Give people freedom to be what they are. If you give them freedom, you get freedom.**” What a nice thing pujya swamiji taught us. Nobody can change anybody else. Only thing is you can show the beauty of change by your own life. You don't have to advise or tell anybody. Seeing the change in you, person will hopefully change. So, let me not connect my peace and happiness with a particular behaviour of people. As long as I am dependent upon a particular behaviour of people for my happiness, I will not have lasting happiness in my life. So let us drop that agenda for the world.

3. Another thing which is important for relative happiness is to have harmony.

Harmony between my activities and my desire. Many times between what we wish and what we are doing there is contradiction. Like I want people to love me, but my behaviour is very antagonising. How can I expect people to like me? Or, like I want everybody to help me, but I am not ready to help anyone. There is a discrepancy. So make sure there is harmony between our activity and our desire. Most of our conflicts are because of disharmony between what we are doing and what we want.

Another aspect of harmony is let there be harmony between two desires. Sometimes we expect opposite things. I want to be very popular and I want to have deep long meditation also. Both are contradictory. So let me have harmony between my desires.

Another important point is, let there be harmony with people around. Let my behaviour be such that I create more friends than enemies. Because you always get more from your friends than your enemies. So if people are friendly with you, then you will definitely more from them. So harmony in relationship with people around is definitely important for *vyavaharika sukham*.

4. Another important thing for happiness is prayers and prayerful attitude. Whatever we do in our life we always acknowledge the importance of hidden factor which can be taken care of by prayers. Another important thing is prayerful attitude. Prayerful attitude means attitude of seeing everything as given and also acknowledging the presence of the giver, Isvara all the time. It implies *prasada buddhi*. This prayerfulness is important for our year becoming happy.

5. Pujya swamiji would emphasise one more thing. We need to earn a lot of grace to make our life happy. Because finally according to our *sastra*, your happiness is *punya phalam*. How do you earn that grace called *punyam* ? By reaching out actions and prayers. These are some of the means for relative happiness. Of course, Upanishad says -

तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां शान्तिः शाश्वतं सुखम् नेतरेषाम् । कठ ५-१२.

*tam Atmasthanam pashyanti dhirah teshAm shAshvatam sukham, na itareshAm.*

Finally abiding ever-lasting happiness is possible only by discovering myself to be limitless *brahman*. But till *atma nishta*, relative happiness is possible by such factors and lot of prayers. Pujya Swamiji would say that we should never lose an opportunity to earn grace.

**Also, how can I contribute to other people's happiness because I tell them – "I wish you a very happy New Year"?**

- First of all, as Pujya Swamiji says be compassionate to others by becoming non-judgmental about yourself and of others. We cannot make a solid judgement about anybody because we do not have complete data about anybody to make a judgement. Therefore in my approach let me be compassionate to others by becoming non-judgmental.

- Another thing- Let me be gentle in my approach while interacting with others. And also whenever I receive favour from anybody, I express my gratitude. Never take anything you receive for granted. If a person does even a small thing, then also acknowledge it and express your gratitude properly. We have seen this in Pujya Swamiji's life.

- Another thing we do for others- we pray for everybody from the bottom of our heart - ***sarve bhavantu sukhinah..***

Thus we can bring happiness in others life by our proper attitude towards them and we bring happiness in our life by proper attitude to all happenings in our life.

This day is celebrated in some places as *Kalpataru* day- a wish fulfilling day. Whatever you wish today , it will be fulfilled. You can pray that this year I would like to focus on this particular aspect in my life. Like let me focus on *uparati*. O lord, please bless and help me.

Invoking the grace of Lord Dakshinamurti and Pujya Swamiji for making this coming year a very happy and fulfilling one, I wish you all once again a very happy New Year.

***Transcribed by  
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