

New Year (2022) message - by Swami Sadatmananda Sarasawati

Om Nama shivaya nama om.....

First of all I wish you all a very happy new year! We have so many festivals like ugadi, Tamil new year, day after deepavali, etc. and quite prevalent is the English New Year day we are celebrating today.

Some of you may not know what is the *tithi* today, but you know what is the date today. What is the month according to Indian calendar you may not know but you will know the English month. That is why somebody nicely said,

न भारतीय नववत्सरोयं तथापि सर्वस्य शिवप्रदः स्यात् ।

यतः धरित्री निखिलैव जनेता ततः कुटुम्बायितं विश्वमेव ॥

Even though it is not the New Year as per Indian calendar but let it also be a source of "*Shivaprada*:" auspiciousness for everybody. In our culture everything we connect with prayer. So we have one more occasion to pray. In Western culture they celebrate with party. We celebrate with prayers.

Pujya Swamiji says that we require such day, such event, which we call a beginning. Because something may not be going okay or even if something is going okay, we want to take it to the next level, then we are waiting for some occasion to reboot our system and start afresh in our life.

Similarly, we are waiting for an occasion to reboot our system. Like with our computer somehow it is not working we reboot the system. Similarly in life also we require rebooting or refreshing.

So as a first day of the year we take this opportunity for offering prayer. Because human beings live upon hope. Hope alone keeps us going. When the person loses all his hopes he lands in difficulty to survive. So hope is important. And that hope is expressed very well on days like this New Year day. We have desire to grow. Our desire manifests in the form of our New Year day resolution.

In fact New Year day resolution itself has become a joke, because many of us cannot fulfill the same. But I am sure that some of you must be making some New Year resolution.

One or two points regarding New Year day resolution is that you should keep them minimum. Do not make a big list of resolutions but keep one or two of them.

Be sure how you are going to implement it. Better to put it in the language of prayer, “ Oh! Lord, I pray to give me the ability of fulfilling my resolution.” So that you may not have guilt in case you could not follow them. Convert the resolution into prayer. Let our every activity be prayer. Pujya Swamiji nicely says that prayer is an action; prayerfulness is an attitude, where our free will is fully expressed. Prayerfulness is awareness that everything is given and the given is non - separate from the giver, the Lord. It is an attitude of remaining connected to the Lord . In fact that is also called devotion. Devotion is my being aware of my connection with the lord.

Prayerfulness is I remain aware of the connection in whatever I a doing. Whatever I have as response to the world physical, oral and mental all are pervaded by my prayerfulness, where I am appreciating the presence of *Ishwara*. Prayer is sending a whats app message or making a call.

What is prayerfulness? Remaining online with Bhagawan ! Prayer fullness will bring objectivity to our life. It will bring pragmatism.

What is pragmatism? It is considering all the factors involved in our action to accomplish our wish. There are some hidden variables and they will be taken care by prayer. This is religious pragmatism. New Year prayer is nothing but religious pragmatism. Generally people think that asking for some benefits. That is not prayer. Truly speaking *puja, japa, parayana and upasana* are prayers. It is like booking your ticket and paying through your debit or credit card. Then only the ticket will be confirmed. Similarly along with your requests to Bhagawan you should do some *japa* or *parayanam*. That alone is considered as a full-fledged prayer in Vedic culture. That is what we are doing today. So we have got prayers in our life, we have got prayerfulness. At the same time this prayerfulness will help you to be objective and to be clear about our action. Prayer is not the substitute for action. The right approach is making efforts prayerfully. That is called a life of a karma yogi, the life of a devotee. When we lead such a life we will have a Happy New Year. As Pujya Swamiji said every day will be a new day, every day will be a celebration. We pray to Bhagawan that may we have these prayers in our life, prayerfulness resulting in objectivity, clarity and sufficient efforts. I wish you a very happy New Year 2022 !

- Report by Swami Jagadatmanandaji.