



Each Day Is a New Beginning

New Year's Message by Swami Jyotirmayananda

AS THE WHEEL of time rolls on, days and nights alternate and flow into weeks, weeks into fortnights, and fortnights into months. Thus, as months, years, ages, and eons continue to move on, every human achievement, every object of creation, is caught in the whirlpool of time.

Where is that mighty Alexander who, having discovered that the world of his time was so small, wept because he saw very little possibility of enjoying the thrill of conquering new countries? Where is that valiant Napoleon who, intoxicated by his apparent success, proclaimed that the word “impossible” did not exist in the French dictionary? Where are all those mighty personalities who once dazzled the world with their great achievements?

This is the transient world we live in. Therefore, do not allow your mind to be involved in gathering the perishable objects of the world. Your existence has a Divine purpose, and that purpose is the attainment of Self-realization.

A traveler with a fixed destination should not be distracted by objects he passes on the road or tempted by the charming gardens and orchards he sees. Rather, he should continue until his destination is reached. Much in the same manner, you should not be distracted by the material values of life or the numerous attachments and entanglements that you encounter.

As you enter the new year, reflect upon what you have gained during the past years, and what you must strive for during the new year. Reflect upon the transient nature of objects and the illusion that envelops the material values of life, and thus strive to develop qualities which enable you to become transformed into a Divine being.

When your intellect is able to understand the deeper purpose for which you exist, and when your heart begins to surge with the feeling of magnanimity and universality, your personality resembles a fragrant flower. Though that flower will wither in time, its fragrance continues to elevate humanity for countless years to come.

Reflect upon the following points and practice them in order to enjoy the eternal Bliss of Liberation even during this very life, thereby allowing you to radiate harmony and peace in the world.

EACH DAY IS A NEW BEGINNING:

Learn from the past but do not become confined to the past. Remember that you are the architect of your destiny and that you have within infinite possibilities. You are essentially the Self, the Reality behind all that exists. As you develop insight into your true spiritual identity you will find the increasing possibility of exercising your self-effort to bring about a Divine change within yourself.

CHANGE THE ANGLE OF VISION: Do not live with a sense of boredom. Avoid maintaining the thought that you are going to face similar days of confusion and struggle in the future. See a Universal Plan operating through your life. Do not entertain thoughts of regret about the past. Do not tie your mind down to vain expectations for the future. Rather, live in the present with a sense of detachment and transcendence.

YOU ARE NOT THIS BODY; YOU ARE THE DIVINE SELF: Learn the art of removing the idea that you are the body. By consistently thinking you are the body, and you are going to die, you restrict your mental powers and mar the luminosity of your intellect. You therefore fill your mind with the impressions of fear, insecurity, hatred, desire, and unrest. In addition to this, all your thoughts circle around that fictitious center of the ego, which you are not.

Remember the story of Queen Madalasa who sang a Vedantic lullaby to her children thereby giving them the spiritual message of universality during their young age. Her cradle song was: “Oh child, you are pure; you are enlightened; you are ever free. You are untouched by the illusion of the world-process.” According to

the Puranas this sublime teaching resulted in the queen’s children becoming enlightened Sages.

Contrasted from this glorious ideal, see how people are fed material values of life from their very birth. They are constantly reminded that they are nothing but the physical body; that they belong to a particular family or community and therefore they must strive to enjoy the pleasures of the senses and to gain success, fame, and security in life. Then once these thoughts are deeply planted in the human mind, they continue to hypnotize the individual until the day he dies. Learn to dehypnotize yourself by asserting, “I am not this body. I am the Self. I am Pure Existence, Pure Consciousness and Pure Bliss.”

ENJOY SATSANGA: *Satsanga* or good association frees your mind from the pressure of erroneous thoughts that permeate your daily existence. Learn to enjoy spiritual discourses given by Sages and Saints who are filled with the vision of the Self. In turn become a source of *satsanga* for others.

Disseminate the teachings of the Gita, the Upanishads, or other mystic scriptures of the world by the way you live. Do not become a petty-minded preacher, but rather, have a profound understanding of the fact that all religious and mystical systems teach the same truth. They all lead the individual soul to the same goal — Liberation from the limitations of the world-process.

PRAY AND MEDITATE: In your daily life, set aside a portion of your time for prayer and meditation. Just as you cannot live without food, air, and water, similarly you should not live without prayer and meditation even for a single day.

Allow your mind to become a bee that gathers spiritual honey from the lotus feet of the Lord by the exercise of prayer, repetition of mantra (Divine name) and loving surrender to God. Adopt any Divine ideal according to your choice. Thus, worship God through Christ or Krishna,

through Rama or Shiva, through Buddha or Mohammed.

While you fill your heart with the nectar of Divine feelings, also learn the art of stilling the bubbling thoughts of the mind and directing the intellect towards the understanding of the nature of the Self. Meditation and spiritual enquiry should be practiced daily to change the *vasanas* (subtle desires) that are the seeds of karmic entanglements.

PRACTICE SELFLESS SERVICE: In this world the spiritual values of goodness, kindness, generosity, love and understanding seem to diminish each day and are replaced with cruelty, falsehood, greed, and violence. However, avoid being swept away by the current of material values in life. Rather strive to become increasingly serviceable to humanity. Selfless service of humanity is the most effective method of freeing the mind of the negative mentation arising out of anger, greed, hatred, passion, and falsehood. Recognize the fact that God dwells in every human being and that any service directed towards the promotion of happiness, harmony and enlightenment of humanity is an effective form of Divine worship.

KEEP THE GOAL BEFORE YOUR VIEW: March on with an undaunted valor. Do not stop until the goal is reached. If you are gathering particles of gold from the sands of a river, you will continue with determination to gather them regularly with increasing interest. How much more interesting and absorbing it must be to gather the luminous spiritual values of life, thus attaining the ultimate goal wherein all miseries of life terminate, and the soul recognizes its identity with the Supreme Self.

Enrich your personality with Divine qualities and enjoy the everlasting Bliss of the Self even within this life.

*May God bless you with a
glorious new year!*



FROM SWAMIJI'S KITCHEN

Mixed Vegetable Sabji

1 medium zucchini or eggplant, cut into pieces
2 large potatoes, cut into pieces
1 large tomato, chopped
2 cups cauliflower pieces
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 Tbs. vegetable oil
1/4 tsp. cumin seeds
1 or two whole small dried chilis
1/2 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. or more curry powder, garam masala, or chat masala (spice blends available in Indian groceries)
salt to taste

Fry cumin seeds and chili in oil just until they sputter. Then add potato, onion and garlic and stir. Cover the pan and fry on high heat until onion is translucent. Add curry powder and turmeric (or spice blends of your choice), stirring until vegetables are well coated with the spices.

Now add all the other vegetables and salt. Fry for five minutes and then add three cups of water. Cover and cook. You may add 1/2 cup of buttermilk, but it is optional. This adds a different flavor. When potatoes are tender, *sabji* is ready. Serve hot with bread or any rice or wheat preparation.

This is the typical method of preparing vegetables in India. Various vegetables can be cooked together according to your choice.