

Let us furrow new path on this New Year  
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Ireland, an island nation west of Great Britain, experienced a periodic famine in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The people experienced terrible hunger especially during the period of the potato-famine (1845-50). Calamity struck Ireland when their staple food the potato crops failed. As a result thousands of Irish people were forced to migrate to North America.

Drama writer Gerald Healey wrote a play entitled the 'The Black Stranger' based on the terrible Irish famine. In the play one of the main characters is young Michael. One day when Michael went out, he saw people building a road that led to nowhere.

The government was building the road in order to provide work for the people affected by the famine. But Michael saw and all the people knew that there was no use building such a road, which led to nowhere. They were working for a road, which would not be useful to anyone.

When Michael returned home, he told his father, "Daddy, people are building a road that leads nowhere. The road will be of no use to people!"

We don't build roads that reach nowhere and of no use to people. We build roads with a specific purpose and see that it will be useful to many people.

But how about the road of our life? Do we have a specific direction and goal? Does the chosen road of my life serve others and me? Does the road of my life have a specific direction and precise goals? When we put behind us the year 2004 and enter into 2005 these are some of the questions we can ask ourselves.

Most people walk on the trodden path. Let us examine our paths in the beginning of this New Year. How was my past year? What did I achieve last year? Did the path I look, help me and other people to have a happy and contented life? Were my path, my goals and my achievements useful for me and for others? Perhaps I need to tread a new path in this New Year. How is my preparation to furrow a new path for my life? And I open to think new ways and new beginning?

If we can compare the past year to a fallen leaf, then the New Year is like a bud. The fallen leaf cannot be replanted onto the tree. It can only lie on the ground and get disintegrated to become part of the earth. The old leaf is of no use to the new bud. There is need of sunlight for the new bud for its growth. The new bud opens and grows in the sunlight with proper care and manure. The bud in due time will grow into a graceful leaf.

This is also the case with human life, the past year has gone forever. We will not get it back and now like a bud we have to live in the New Year. To reach our goal during this New Year let us get God's grace like the sunlight and also the cooperation of our dear and near ones. Let us make our own way this New Year by working hard with discipline to reach the goals we have set for ourselves. Let us break new ground. Let us always take a noble path to reach our high goals.

During this New Year let us now keep in mind that our personalities and our culture are reflected in our words and deeds. I like cleanliness and would like to keep my house tidy and neat. But if I throw the garbage gathered from my house in front of my neighbour's house or on the public road it will show my lack of culture and good breeding. Then I believe in discipline and I expect discipline from all the people in my house, but if I drive my vehicle on the public road without observing the traffic rules, then I am proclaiming myself, as an uncultured and uncouth person.

If we evaluate our lives on the basis of all these things, then the New Year gives us an opportunity to make a new beginning. With proper values and ideals in our lives, we can build the 'mandir' of our lives on the foundation of faith with the stone and cement of love and humility. Let us decorated such a mandir-like life with selfless service, noble thoughts and generosity. If we keep our lives in this New Year clean and noble, the floods and the storms of life will not harm the 'mandir' of our lives which are rooted on strong foundation.

In this New Year even if unexpected tragedy strikes or we are showered with unforeseen blessings of God, let us keep our equanimity in all circumstances. We will keep our peace of mind both in the events of a tragedy or of special blessings. Let us neither be dispirited nor be puffed up in varying situations. In this way our lives will be energetic and peaceful.

Finally as we enter the New Year and make our path ahead through opportunities and difficulties, let us thank God profusely for all His graces which we have received. Let us decide to work with faith and discipline in collaboration with the people whom we love. Let us ask God's blessing on all the people especially on those whom we do not love, as we should. Let us contribute our share and pray for a just social order and thus let us make this New Year a happy and prosperous year for one and all. In his way we will furrow new path during this New Year.