

# ഘട്ടമൊഴി Ayubowan (May You Have Long Life)

According to the global calendar, 2025 marks a fresh start for everyone around the world. A typical year is made up of 12 months, 48 weeks, and 365 days—around 8,760 hours in total. As we reflect on the past year, we may find it elusive, often feeling like a dream rather than a tangible reality. Yet, we have our records to remind us of the journey. As the ascetic Sharakāra wisely noted, “Our life is a stream falling from a mountain.” This raises the question: who truly measures the time we’ve spent over the last 365 days?

Who defines the dawn of days and nights? When we examine this widely accepted concept, it becomes clear that the movements of the Sun and Earth within our galaxy are the true creators of these cycles. Consequently, the ‘Year’ is recognized in astrology and folklore as the ‘Soorya Warsha’ or Solar Year. The vastness of the universe, filled with numerous galaxies, is undeniably intriguing. However, we will focus on the fundamental understanding of our surroundings and how humanity on Earth has comprehended and reacted to these cosmic phenomena.

In ancient times, it was widely accepted that the sun revolved around a stationary Earth, a concept known as the Geocentric model—derived from the Greek word ‘geo,’ meaning ‘earth.’ According to this belief, all celestial bodies, including the Moon, were considered to orbit the Earth. However, this perspective was revolutionized by Galileo, who championed the Heliocentric theory, asserting that the sun is at the center of our solar system. The term ‘Heliocentric’ comes from the Greek word ‘Helios,’ which refers to the sun. Furthermore, scientific advancements have confirmed that planets such as Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Jupiter, along with countless others, rotate around the sun, showcasing the vast complexity of our universe.

Ancient astrologers recognize only nine planets, using them to predict whether their clients' futures will be fortunate or unfortunate. It's puzzling that astrologers dismiss the trillions of other planets, claiming they lack influence like the nine significant ones. This raises a compelling question: does this not suggest that astrology might be more myth than reality?

In contrast, we live in a scientifically rich era, celebrated for its remarkable inventions and groundbreaking discoveries. Since man first set foot on the Moon in 1969, the advances we've made in our understanding of the universe have been extraordinary. One can't help but wonder how much more we have yet to uncover.

To illustrate this thirst for knowledge about the universe, consider the wisdom of Lord Buddha. There is a story about Arahat Mahā Moggallāna Thero, a divine monk who sought to reach the universe's end. After traveling far from Earth, he found himself stranded in the vast expanse and turned to The Buddha for help. This account highlights the limitless boundaries of our exploration and the profound truths still waiting to be discovered.

Regarding this incident, The Enlightened One established a clear rule for the monks: they must avoid any entanglement with the outer world, understanding its creation and function. According to Buddhist philosophy, the journey of Sansāra—the cycle of reincarnation that leads to human suffering, or 'Dukkha'—is fundamentally driven by craving and aversion. The Buddha emphatically guided his followers to seek a path out of suffering rather than engage in experiments with the universe itself. In essence, He instructed us to delve into the exploration of our own minds and experiences, rather than the external world.

In Buddhist philosophy, the concept of the 'world' transcends the external environment and delves into the inner self or mind of the individual. This is why the Dhamma consistently urges disciples to explore the depths of their minds. A central focus on this theme can be found in the Dhammapada, where an entire chapter, known as 'Chitta Vagga' or the chapter of mind, is dedicated to this exploration. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan emphasizes this point in his introduction to the Dhammapada, stating, "Our mental nature results from what we have thought, which is governed by our thoughts, which are shaped by our thoughts." His insightful interpretation of the Dhammapada captivates those who seek wisdom and understanding.

Furthermore, he articulates a profound truth in the first stanza of this book: "The influence of thought on human life and society is immense. All that we are is the direct result of our thoughts. While we inhabit a world of tangible facts, we ultimately dwell in a realm shaped by our thoughts. By transforming our mindset, we transform our lives, which in turn enables us to change the world." (Dhammapada, Radhakrishnan, 58 p). This perspective may be

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viewed as religious or an ancient saying, yet it resonates with the insights of philosophers like René Descartes, who declared, “I think; therefore I am.”

This perspective asserts that if individuals do not engage in thought, the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch—hold no real significance. Everything in our world is a product of human thought and creativity, whether positive or negative. It becomes clear that human beings are accountable for all that surrounds them, both mentally and physically. By understanding this, we can identify the sources of our challenges and those capable of resolving them. We can transform our circumstances by altering our mindset, free from prejudice, hatred, jealousy, or aversion. Thus, we possess the power to change ourselves and, consequently, reshape the world into a better place.

As we step into this new year, we are embarking on an exciting journey toward a transformative era filled with immense possibilities. All of us at Explore Sri Lanka extend our heartfelt wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year - 2025 to Sri Lankans and the world. Remember, in Sri Lanka, we greet one another with ‘Āayu bōwan,’ a phrase that embodies our wish for everyone to ‘Long Live.’ Let’s embrace the future with confidence and enthusiasm!



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