

# New Year Message for 2005

SWAMI BODHANANDA



The world is passing through a severe crisis - a crisis of leadership. The world leadership has unfortunately become hegemonic and unilateral. The great ideals like truth, goodness and beauty that used to motivate human action have been forgotten and the humanistic objectives like freedom, justice and equality by which social action was judged are being misused by the powers that be to suit their narrow objective of world domination. Opinion polls, advertisements and ruthless lobbying by vested interests move the levers of power. All these happen when two-thirds of the world is still groaning in abject poverty, illnesses, ignorance and lack of opportunities. Not that we lack resources and ideas to bring justice and solace to the suffering world. But we lack the collective political and moral will to allocate resources to where they are needed most.

It is true that the ideal of equality and justice may not go hand in hand with the pragmatic objective of optimal and productive allocation of resources. But that problem has been staring at humanity since time immemorial. With efficient use of technology and committed political management we must be able to bring justice to the suffering humanity.

What saddens an average individual is the death of inspiring humanistic ideologies and the wanton misuse of ideas to further sectarian objectives of powerful groups and nations. Leadership is purposeful action to lift human beings from the state of nature to a state of culture. In the state of nature inequality and the rule of might prevails. But in a state of culture the equilibrium favourable to equality and individual freedom are promoted. To inspire human beings to think on those lines and initiate social action based on those principles require imaginative leadership, a leadership based on spiritual and ethical commitment and concerns. The gradual extinction of such leadership from world stage and the sneaky emergence of shameless leaders who pursue power, money and pleasures for themselves and their legions are the causes of alarm. The utopia of material prosperity that they sell acts like an opium on the masses.

A vast network of hierarchical control and the disproportional and often undeserved boons that they receive keep the machinery of exploitation efficient and well-greased. The unexpected collapse of an inefficient socialist system, along with those egalitarian ideals and the resultant intellectual confusion and anarchy, has put the world in a downward spin. The ideal of a new world order and human rights and principle of self-determination have become just smoke screens for the ruling class to pursue their agenda silently and systematically. It looks as though a heartless robot have taken over the

destinies of nations and human beings. Added on to that are the spectres of oil crisis, aids menace, and, terrorist violence. The cumulative effect will not only be unimaginable suffering to humanity but also increased confusion and opportunities for global exploitation.

I find that the year just passed by has brought more problems than solutions and the idealism of the 1950-s and 1960-s and the optimism of the 1970-s and 1980-s have all come to a natural death and the puny leaders of the world- the Bushes and the Blairs, the Jintaos and the Putins - are all groping in darkness and are forced to take irrationally fundamental positions in search for elusive clarity and certitude.

From this bleakness I can project only a bleaker 2005. There will be more of everything foreboding - more terrorist attacks, more aids related deaths, more corporate greed, more superpower arrogance, more religious and ethnic intolerance, more leadership gaffes, more fruitless and costly research in the field of science and more unemployment and mass discontent and general drift, both in the developed and developing world. We are on the eve of a terrible world crisis. And the end of the socialist world will not end without the end of the western hegemony and the politics of top-down social engineering.

My hope is that out of the womb of this darkening crisis will emerge a new dawn of hope and human possibilities. Thinking people all over the world must turn their attention on this impending crisis and its vast potentialities, rather than harping on old mantras and slogans.

As the Katha Upanishad exhorts: Arise, Awake, stop not till the goal is reached.

May that be the message for the New Year 2005. It is high time for us to change track and think bold, feel deep, dream big and act daringly.

**SWAMI BODHANANDA**

*10.00 a.m. 23 December 2004, Palakkad, Kerala*

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