

Everything Changes, but Nothing is Lost

New Year Message for 2008

SWAMI BODHANANDA



December 31, 2007, 6.30 pm.

It was dusk.

As I stood gazing into the dark river flowing by, I saw the weary wrinkled year 2007 fading into the background, shaking unbelievably its domed baldhead. Its flowing white beard swayed in the humid evening breeze.

I felt sad. So too would you, I am sure.

The river didn't care. It has seen many such departures - for it, just a routine change of guard.

Nor did the ancient snarling banyan tree, with wildly spread branches, and aerial roots growing down like in

a cavernous cave. This tree has been through it all - births and deaths, arrivals and departures.

I noticed a giant granite rock brooding by the river, lashed by the swirling frothing currents. In spite of being in the middle of such turbulence, the rock was cool. Nothing seemed to matter.

Bats ominously hung on tree branches. The crickets began their nightlong symphony. A couple of crows cowed their harsh message: 'take anything that comes your way and make the best of it'.

My silence morphed into the thought: I will never see the year 2007 again - never.

I felt forlorn - lost opportunities, withered hopes, and stillborn promises.

January 1, 2008, 6.30 am.

Mist hung on to the sleepy morning.

At the end of a long walk I came to the same river again. The river takes a sharp turn towards the Western direction where I stood. It was high tide time. Water touched my feet. I felt a surge of energy - the ebb and flow of life. My eyes widened, hair stood on their end. I looked far into the distant future over the glistening flowing river. The river was a sheet of black gold. It pierced through the coconut groves embraced by sturdy, grassy banks.

The dawn painted crimson on the Western horizon as birds flew across. Temperature rose and dew on the grass sizzled.

Under the banyan tree a priest waved a lighted lamp to an open-air deity. Silvery droplets, residue from an early morning drizzle, showered on my head as a white eagle descended on the tree branch.

I saw the cherubic face of the year 2008 taking quick steps and reaching forward to me. The New Year was full of promise and hope, mirth and joy, youth and play. A koel cooed merrily. Breeze wafted, leaves rustled, ripples formed on the velvety river, orange sun shot up from the blue, silently but brilliantly.

A forgotten memory awakened in my mind: "Everything changes, but nothing is lost".

Happy New Year! A very happy New Year! A very eventful happy New Year!

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