

Dear Sisters and Brothers
Saprem Namaskar

This year Gita Jayanti is on 30th November. Generally, we celebrate Gita Jayanti as Kutumba Sammelanam because Gita is not a book just for scholars but it has a philosophy for life. Therefore, such philosophy should be inculcated in young age and that is possible in family. This year in many branches, the film show of the life of Mananeeya Eknathji is going on the eve of Sadhana Diwas. In some places, it is planned in coming week. Therefore, it is probable that few branches would not be able to organize Kutumba Sammelanam. Where it is possible it should be done and where not possible in Kendra Varga or Nagar Samiti Baithak the discussion can be done on the following points.

Advent of Srikrishna was at the end of Dwaparyuga and the Kaliyuga started with his giving up of his body. Thus his message was for the coming yuga, for our times. What is his message?

When the times are peaceful and everyone is practicing Dharma, the understanding of Dharma is simpler. But when the society becomes complex, when it is not homogenous when there are adharmic forces the understanding of Dharma has to be deeper and its application subtler. Srikrishna gave us this wisdom.

Generally, it is said that Srikrishna gave us the essence of Upanishads. The teachings of Srikrishna are based on the Vedantic vision. But he further synthesizes, deepens and gives the varied and timely interpretations and applications of the age-old traditions. Sri Jnaneshwar explains this very beautifully. He says that Vedas are considered as the breath of sleeping Ishvara. But Bhagavadgita was told by God himself so how timely and clear it should be. Thus, we see new dimensions of the Vedic vision in Bhagawadgita.

Before the time of Srikrishna there were two separate ways for two types of seekers. The path of Sanyas was for those who wanted Atmajnana. As Atma is not a doer, this path also insisted on giving up of all the karmas - Sarvakarma Sanyas Marg. Actionlessness was considered as the hall mark of Sanyas. The other path was for those who wanted to have happiness here and hereafter. So in this the stress was only for the ritualistic Yagnas. Such paths for these two types of seekers are all right in a society where there are no enemies to it and the society is internally organized and self-propelled. But when there are such Asuric or Adharmik forces which are violent and exclusive then society cannot afford to have a big chunk of it either inactive or immersed in one's own pursuit whether spiritual or materialistic.

Srikrishna synthesized both the paths. He removed the actionlessness of Sanyasmarg but accepted Atmajnana as the ultimate. He removed the desired-based Karma (Kamyas Karma) but stressed on the importance of doing ordained work (Niyat Karma) in order to get the Atmajnana. Thus the vision and purpose of both the paths became same and both the paths became complimentary to each other. Vision of Oneness became the basis of doing of one's duties as the offerings to Ishvara. Sri Krishna said if one wants whether happiness or Atmajnana one has to work. Even after one gets Atmajnana one continues to do work, as Atma is non-doer but body-mind complex is to be employed in work. Thus the aspirants of Atmajnana as well as Atmajnanis do Karma as the contribution for the regeneration of society - Samaj Dharana. Doing one's own ordained Karma becomes the link with Ishvara who is everywhere. It is this that in our Kendra Prayer also we stress as karmayogaikanishtha Karmayoga as the only committed life style.

Sri Krishna also talks of phenomena of Avatar, which is not in Upanishadic scriptures. As per Gita, God has not left the world to its fate. But the world is progressing under the very vigilant and active care of God. Whenever Dharma is on decline, means whenever the world loses its direction for inner growth, for further evolution then God takes birth to protect it. Along with the assurance of 'I take birth again and

again for the protection of Dharma' there is also another thing which is in Gita and that is Vishwaroopa darshan. Sri Krishna tells Arjun "Nimitamatram bhava Savya sachin" - Be my instrument.

If we study whole Gita, we see that God does not do work himself but chooses human beings as His instruments. Even in Mahabharat war, Krishna does not fight directly but improves the capability of the Pandavas for fighting Adharmic forces by giving them clear and deeper understanding of Dharma at every stage. The understanding of Dharma, clarity of purpose is the divinity within us in Kaliyuga. Unfortunately, our understanding got degenerated; we forgot the lessons of Gita. We only chanted Gita but failed to apply the teaching of Sri Krishna in life. We started thinking that for fighting with Adharmic forces and for the establishment of Dharma God only has to take birth. If anyone did work hard for Dharma then instead of seeing how he worked as the perfect instrument of the Divine and by doing that raised oneself higher, we made that person as avatar and shirked our responsibility of exerting for the protection of Dharma.

Dharma means cherishing, protecting and practicing the eternal principles of this interconnected and interdependent universe by our words and actions. Dharma means to hold the family, society, nation together for development, to maintain harmony in it. One cannot be indulging in protecting one's own image, likes and dislikes, attachments etc while working for Dharma, or any collectivity like family, society and nation. Bhishma was more concerned about his vow of no marriage even after his step mother requested to save family lineage by getting married. Karna was more concerned about keeping his image as 'Danveer' than victory of Kauravas. Dronacharya's attachment to his son was more important than anything else in the world.

But Krishna did always that what was good for the Dharma based society. Though he had said he would not take the weapons in his hand even then he took the wheel of a chariot in his hand when Bhishma became uncontrollable. He would become angry when it is necessary and otherwise not whatever one may try. Krishna tells that even our image, our name is for the good of the collectivity. If the need be we have to sacrifice even that for the good of the family, society and nation. Sri Krishna gave that lesson by asking Yudhishtira to tell '*Ashwathma Hata:*' - Ashwatthama is dead. Telling whatever has happened as it is, is not Satya. But Satya-Truth is those words which protect the society. *Yad Bhutahitam Atyantam tad satyam* - That is truth which is for the good of people.

Sri Krishna told that it is Adharma to deal with adharmic or asuric forces on the basis of principles which are for followers of Dharma. He explains to Arjuna how to behave with the Adharmic when Arjuna refuses to shoot arrow at Karna because he was not in chariot. There are examples after examples in Mahabharat. But the essence of it is that we cannot interpret Dharma same way for all and in all situations. Its understanding is always in the context of what is good for the society. Individual gains, likes and dislikes and self-images are not important. Only when such men are around, it means when there are men with national character and personal character then there is victory and well-being of the society.

So let us focus on these points in Gita Jayanti celebrations in this year.

1. *Karmayogaikanishtha* - with reference to what is our place, age and dayitva we have to keep on working. Each one of us has an ordained duty, role to play in our family. The family has a role to play for the good of the society. The society has a role to play for the good of the nation and the nation has an ordained duty for the evolution of human being and protection of creation. Family is not only for taking care of itself. But it is the basic unit of the society and nation.

This year we are celebrating the 150th Birth Anniversary of Sister Nivedita. She wanted that education in which nation would become central point of existence for men as well as women. She wanted women of

India not to give up their grace and sweetness in favour of Western information and social aggressiveness but she wanted women to equally participate in nation building by enlarging and expanding their concern of family to the nation. She wanted nation to be the motive even for taking care of family. She said, *“The problem of the age, for India, as we have constantly insisted, is to supersede the family, as a motive, and even as a form of consciousness, by the civic and national unity. This cannot be done by men as men alone. It is still more necessary that it should be done by women.”*

How would it be done - By right education at home as well as in educational institutions? She explained, *“This thought that education is not only good for child himself but should be more so for Jana-Desh-Dharma should always be present in the minds of educators. There is no fear of weakness and selfishness for one whose whole training has been formed round this nucleus. Each day should begin with some conscious act of reference to it. Education in India today has to be not only national but Nation-making. We must surround our children with the thought of their nation and their country. ...The centre of gravity must lie for them outside the family. We must demand from them sacrifices for India; Bhakti for India; learning for India. The ideal for its own sake! India for the sake of India! This must be as the breath of life to them. ...It is a mistake to think that heroes are born. Nothing of the sort. They are made not born; made by the pressure of heroic thought. All human beings long at bottom of their heart for self-sacrifice. No other thirst is so deep as this. Let us recognize this direct this towards single thought ie love for the country.*

The main thrust of celebration of Gita Jayanti could be that in Kendra Vargas or in Kutumba Sammelans we discuss about how to make nation as the center in the family or how to run family with national consciousness? All the Sthanik Karyakartas can even discuss this topic with the family members and whatever points emerge which could be followed in our family be listed. I am deliberately not giving whatever comes to my mind because that would condition your minds. It would be very nice if you could send the points of our discussions in celebrations or at homes to me. Compiling that in the next year, we shall have exhaustive list of it in Gita Jayanti letter.

2. God does his work of Dharma Samsthapana through the human instruments. We are Sadhan in His hands. Each family is his Sadhan instrument. If the instrument is not working properly, it is given up. For example if the cycle is not working properly or pen is not writing properly then it is discarded. Fortunately, we are born in the great land and also great Dharma. Just imagine in thousands of years of invasions our ancestors how much they must have suffered but they did give up Hindu Dharma. So we are born in this great land in Hindu Dharma. That means God has chosen us individually and family-wise as His instruments. We have to work for Him, for Hindu Dharma and as our offering of gratitude to our ancestors. What is that work how it is manifested in each family can be discussed.

Hope you will have very fruitful discussions in Kutumba Sammelanam or with other Karyakartas and later with your family members and thus Gita Jayanti helps us in emerging our family as further Dharmik with right understanding of Dharma.

With warm regards
Yours Sincerely

Nivedita