

Dear Sisters and Brothers
Saprem Namaskar

Though formally with the 'Samidha' program, the celebrations of Mananeeya Eknathji Januma Shati Parva is concluded still some programs are continuing. Similarly when the Gita Jayanti approaches some Karyakartas would be travelling to Kanyakumari for the Sarthak Yuva Samartha Bharat Shibir. And yet many of our centers would be preparing for the celebration of Gita Jayanti. We can have the celebration of Gita Jayanti for the families of Karyakarta.

Advent of Sri Krishna 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. Sri Krishna gave us this wisdom.

Generally it is said that Sri Krishna gave us the essence of Upanishads. It is true in the sense that the teachings of Sri Krishna are based on the Vedantic vision only. But he further synthesizes, deepens and gives the varied and timely interpretations and applications to 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 and clearer dimensions of the Vedic vision in Bhagawadgita.

Before Sri Krishna, there were two separate ways for two types of seekers. The path of Sannyas was for those who wanted Atmajnana. As Atma is not a doer this path also insisted on giving up of all the karmas - Sarvakarma Sannyas Marg. Actionlessness was considered as the hall mark of Sannyas. 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 alright 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 pursuit of one's own happiness.

Sri Krishna synthesized both the paths. He removed the actionlessness of Sannyasmarg but accepted Atmajnana as the ultimate. He removed the desired-based Karma (Kamy 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 (Both ultimately being same) one has to work. Even after one gets Atmajnana one continues to do work, as they know that it is only body-mind complex which works and Atma is non-doer. Thus the aspirants of Atmajnana as well as Atmajnanis do Karma as their contribution for the regeneration of society - Samaj Dharana. Doing one's own ordained Karma becomes the link with Ishvara who is everywhere. This is stressed in our Kendra Prayer 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'. And yet Ishwara even in incarnation works through instruments. Thus Sri Krishna tells Arjuna "Nimittamatram 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 only God 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 and protecting the eternal principles of this interconnected and interdependent universe by our words and actions. Dharma means to hold the family, society, nation together in harmony for development. One cannot by focusing on one's own image, likes and dislikes, attachments etc work for Dharma, nation, society or any collectivity. 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 wheel as Sudarshan when Bhishma became uncontrollable. He would become angry when it was necessary but not otherwise howsoever one may try. Krishna tells that even our image, our name is for the good of the collectivity. If need be, we have to sacrifice even that for the good of the society. Sri Krishna gave that lesson by asking Yudhishtira to tell 'Ashwathma Hataha' - 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 ultimate 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. It is Adharma to tolerate the adharmic forces. 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 in the 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 there are around such men with national character and personal character then there is victory and well-being of the society is assured.

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 to the best of our ability.
2. God does his work of Dharma Samsthapana through the human instruments. We are Sadhan-instruments in His hands.
3. The clarity of purpose and understanding and practice of Dharma is the manifestation of Divinity within us.
4. Dharma is subtle and thus application or practice of Dharma with respect to the Adharmic is not same as that to the Dharmic.

With warm regards and prayers

Yours Sincerely

Nivedita