



Puja Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji

Ashirvadam

Dear Divine Souls,

I hope that - by God's grace - this finds you and all your loved ones in the best of health and happiness at this International Gita Conference.

There is a true galaxy of holy scriptures, each one its own solar system of stars and suns. Each contains an unparalleled wealth of wisdom and inspiration from our rishis. These scriptures are the lamps that shine brightly on the path of righteousness and truth, guiding our way in the dark of night. The Bhagavad Gita provides wisdom and upliftment, comfort and solace to people of all ages, from all walks of life, from all corners of the Earth. As Puja Paramhansa Yoganandaji said, "The Bhagavad Gita is the most beloved scripture of India, a scripture of scriptures. It is the Hindu's Holy Testament, the one book that all masters depend upon as a supreme source of scriptural authority."

The Bhagavad Gita says that whenever there is darkness in the world, whenever strife and ignorance prevail, the Lord incarnates to shine His divine light on the darkness. He grabs hold of the faltering world, preventing it from drifting too far astray.

However, the Lord does not simply incarnate, give wisdom and depart. Rather, His divine light, His divine message and His divine grace continue to shine, on and on, upon all future generations.

His wisdom is such that, once given, it is timeless and eternal, infinite and universal. Lord Krishna's message in the Bhagavad Gita is not meant merely for those who lived 5000 years ago. Rather, the messages are as timeless as His presence and grace.

Many are familiar with the Bhagavad Gita. We know that Lord Krishna's verbal message to Arjun on the battlefield was "Stand up. Do your duty." However, there are many other important messages in the Gita and also invaluable lessons and divine teachings embedded in the very life He lived.

Fearlessness

One of the most important messages that Bhagwan Krishna gives to Arjuna is Abhayam, be fearless. Arjuna was afraid to battle, afraid of killing his relatives and loved ones. In our lives also we are paralyzed fear. Omnipresent fear is one of the most insidious obstacles to our peace, happiness and progress in life. When I say fear, I don't necessarily mean terror. But, rather I mean all that makes us anxious, nervous, tense and in need of controlling our surroundings. The root of fear is distrust. We have been betrayed, injured and abused. We decide that the world and those around us cannot be trusted. In this way, we lose that faith which is so crucial.



What is the answer? The answer to fear is to firmly root ourselves in God (by whatever name, whatever form you choose). When we realize that God is always with us, always for us, we will never be afraid regardless of the circumstances.

Sure, our family and friends may betray us. They may injure us. But, if we give ourselves to God, if we make our relationship with Him our first priority then we will never be broken inside; we will always be cared for.

Let the Divine Be Our Charioteer

During the battle of Kurukshetra, which sets the backdrop of the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna served as charioteer for Arjuna. However, He did not only direct the reins of Arjuna's horses, but truly directed the reins of Arjuna's life.

The real Kurukshetra is within us. Each of us is Arjuna, struggling with right and wrong, temptation, fear and frustration. Our bodies are our chariots, being driven all too frequently by our senses as the horses. The mind, ego, desires, lust and greed are the evil Kauravas with whom we must do righteous battle, from whom we must not shy away in fear and trepidation. If, instead of letting our chariots be driven by our senses, we give the reins to the Divine, we will surely be victorious.

In our lives, we feel the weight of all problems upon our own shoulders and imagine that they are up to us to solve. We feel alone, tired, frustrated and helpless. We forget that we have another source of strength, outside of our own bodies.

Yet, we must never forget our other source of strength - God. No hurdle or challenge or obstacle is insurmountable by Him. We must simply ask Him, with sincerity, purity and love, to come and help us remove the obstacles on our path. God has not created us to suffer. Rather He has given us intellect, intuition, purity, piety and faith that we may overcome suffering. He is here, at every moment of every day, to help us along the path, to relieve us of our burdens no matter how heavy they may seem.

Don't Just BE Divine, But DO Divine!

Lord Krishna says, "Stand up! Do divine! Be divine!"

People today assume that a spiritual path is one of idleness, one of silent contemplation high on a mountain top. But, Lord Krishna teaches otherwise. We should be the hands that do God's work - this is Karma Yoga. We should not only be divine, but we should do divine. "Serve, serve, serve, do your duty on Earth." Our work should be prayer, be meditation. Have His name be on your lips and in your heart, and have His work be on your hands.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Bhagwan Krishna says, "I am the Self, O Gudakesha, seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the Beginning, the Middle and also the End of all beings." When we embark on a spiritual path, or as we walk on the path, we must dedicate ourselves to cultivating the divine vision and awareness with which we can see the Divine in all.

Once we see every being as Divine, we cannot walk by someone who is suffering without helping them. We cannot sleep at night unless we have done our best to lessen the pain of our fellow beings, just as we could not sleep if we neglected to perform the aarti in the mandir or if we forgot to offer food to the deity of Krishna Bhagwan. We cannot see sick, starving animals wandering on the road or watch toxic chemicals dumped into our precious rivers, any more than we could tolerate watching someone toss a Shiva Linga onto the pavement.

So, ultimately, if the spiritual path is true, it culminates in an insatiable urge to serve all, to help all, to give to all, and to live for all.

Let us renew our faith in the Supreme. Let us give away our fears, our anxieties. Let us realize that everything is just as it is supposed to be. When we realize that the Divine is holding the reins of our life, how can anything go wrong?

With love and peace to you all,

In the service of God and humanity,



Swami Chidanand Saraswati