

Dear Sisters and Brothers
Saprem Namaskar

After the conclusion of Mananeeya Eknathji Janma Shati Parva this is the first Samartha Bharat Parva - Swami Vivekananda Jayanti that we would be celebrating. Due to the Sarthak Yuva Samartha Bharat Shibir at Kanyakumari many Karyakartas would be returning to their Karyakshetra by first week of January. Thus, with the help of all in the branch centre, celebrate Samartha Bharat Parva and Vivekananda Jayanti with all our strength and magnificence.

We can also update and use our earlier Samartha Bharat PPT in colleges with those Yuva who are in Yuva Seva and later make them organize Swami Vivekananda Jayanti program in as many colleges as possible.

At the times of Swami Vivekananda, India was in such a pathetic condition that only a visionary could have seen her rising again. It is easier to be proud of your country when everything is going on well. But when there was an all-around poverty; when country was under foreign rule without any sign of freedom; society was divided in regional pride and prejudices; educated were looking down upon their own country & countrymen and praising the rulers, then, it was difficult to see what is good in it. At the best in such times some people may love their motherland because 'it is the motherland' but to see her potential was difficult. But Swami Vivekananda not only loved the country but believed in the destiny of India, and brought back her confidence in herself. How did he do it?

Generally we see what is happening but fail to see the intrinsic worth of anything. If we also see only the apparent variety then we cannot feel the strength of large India. Only a spiritual approach to the problem, means seeing beyond the apparent degradation, beyond the apparent un-connectedness can give real insight. Swami Vivekananda saw the Oneness of India and stressed on it. He focused on the unifying principles - common basis- of the varied communities with their apparently different traditions and customs. He stressed on that. At Lahore, in his speech "Common Bases of Hinduism", he gives us those unifying principles. Generally the dilemma is that if unity is sought then the diversity is destroyed. With the result the communities, regions would lose their identities. This is what

Christianity has done all over the world. Communities without their identity become rootless and either become restless within or resort to violence. If only diversity is emphasized then the communities start warring with each other.

We have to protect the identity and diverse way of life of all the communities but at the same time we cannot have the warring communities hating each other intensely. The approach has to be to see the unifying principles and also to cherish the diversity. Stressing on the common principles of Hinduism and also different expressions of it in various communities is the integral approach. In this approach, the identity of each community is protected at the same time integrated society emerges as the strong entity to fulfill its destined role.

Each nation in the world has something to contribute for the further unfoldment of the divinity of man. This is what Swami Vivekananda explained to us. He said, "Each nation has a message to deliver, a destiny to fulfill, a mission to accomplish." If a nation is awakened to its mission then the nation gets meaning to its existence. To fulfill that it gets a point of reference in understanding the happenings, the pulls and pressures on it by various ideologies in the world. India has to give this vision of Oneness to the world, a society, which is sustainable, based on the Truth of interconnectedness and interdependence of the existence. All those who with their exclusive approach are opposed to this vision of Oneness then become the opponents of nation. India's fighting tendency itself was impaired because we had stopped identifying enemy - the Asuric forces. Swami Vivekananda by awakening us to our national mission gave us the criteria for identifying the hostile and destructive forces. He had said that if Hindu converts to other religion it is not one Hindu less but one enemy more. Identifying the hostile forces or enemy does not mean at all that we take up arms and fight. But it means that we are alert and we protect our people, our culture and our nation.

India does not have the agenda of ruling or dominating over the world. Her mission is to guide the world in creating an ideal social order, a society which is interconnected and therefore caring for each other, a society where human beings are aware of their innate divine nature and strive to realize that. But to give such noble message India needs to be strong and successful civilization. No one would listen to the message of a weakling however noble may be the message. For the

good of the world India has to be a strong and successful country. Today there are indications that our country is coming up. It is becoming an economical power. India is expressing her Asmita-identity; but naturally the forces which are hostile to her are bent upon suppressing her or maligning her. We who are engaged in nation-building should be alert about such forces and should not get carried away by clichés and propaganda. Being the victim of media many are not able to see the inherent strength as well as the actual achievements of India in various fields in the past and also in present. The celebration during this period is to focus on that.

In Swamiji's life we see that he made it a mission of his life to awaken the nation to her glory and the destiny. For that he underwent hunger, hurts and humiliations in America. As he had to represent Hindu Dharma he did not limit himself to any sect or path but gave the unifying principles of Hindu Dharma. He could rise above even the devotion to Sri Ramakrishna while giving the message of Hindu Dharma. When ultimately in the Parliament of Religions he got unprecedented acceptance, he kept away all the temptations and remained steadfast on his path. When he returned to India, again he dedicated his name and popularity for awakening India and did not project himself. For India, he also gave the message of 'do or die'. Applying the ancient vision of 'God is everywhere' he stressed on divinity of man, and the aim of life as its manifestation. He also emphasized to see and serve the living God. All these dimensions of the life of Swami Vivekananda we can focus in this year.

With warm regards and prayers

Yours Sincerely

Nivedita