

LOKASANGRAHA: WELFARE AS A RESPONSIBILITY

Ginish Cheruparambil*

*Researcher,

INDIA

Email id: ginishcheruparambil@gmail.com

DOI: **10.5958/2249-7137.2022.00756.X**

ABSTRACT

We live in a world mixed with multiple fragmentation. Humanity as a whole facing threat as well as nature itself is at threat. How do we address this scenario? Probably an ideological change infused in the current system might be a radical change for the scenario. A holistic approach towards this fatalities or injustice can bring us back to a much renowned feeling of co-existence; which is beautifully established in the concept of lokasangraha. This concept very well integrates the co-existence; as a value as well as a responsibility of the other. This is establishing justice without its violation and sustainability because of respecting the other.

KEYWORDS: Lokasangraha, Cosmotheandric, Upanisadic, Dharma, Sadacara

INTRODUCTION

The Lokasangraha concept is a dynamic social thinking, it is a holistic concept of welfare of every being: seen and unseen, micro and macrocosm, animate and inanimate, human and divine etc. it is an important social awareness says Agarwal quoting K.M. Panikkar..1 Thus, Lokasangraha means 'lokanam sangraha', collecting / protecting the world together, or guarding or protecting the world together or maintenance of various worlds. In the derived sense one could express it as "Holding the world together" or the "Welfare of the world."2 Therefore, I would translate the word 'Lokasangraha' in the plural sense, 'Welfare of the worlds' The word 'worlds' denote not only the visible world where we live and have our being, but also the worlds we are connected with or have our relational being. The worlds summarize the totality of our existence and their inter-connectedness to various spheres of our life. In this sense, it is cosmotheandric.

The Lokasangraha concept, has changed the mindset of people, has given a new vision for the modern people which the ancient Vedic and the Upanisadic scholars failed to bring. We are grateful to the modern thinkers like Tilak, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Gandhi and others who brought a new vision and message through this concept. Their whole outlook, missionary zeal and emancipatory force stirred the minds of the people both positively and negatively.

The Concept of Lokasangraha

The term Lokasangraha is a unique term hardly documented by the scholars over the years. Though the scholars have commented on it, it is hardly anything compared to the other issues and concepts. One can find lengthy discourses and expositions and even books written on different issues and terms found in the Gita like, yajna, dharma, avatara, varna etc. The credit goes to Tilak and then to Agarwal who discovered this novel concept giving a social dimension to it. Let us try to understand the meaning of the term and its significance.

Meaning and Derivative Meaning

The meaning can be understood in two ways: in a derivative sense and in a popular sense. The word Lokasangraha is derived from two words: lokah and sahgraha. The root word for lokah is lok. The verbal form means, 'to see' or 'to consider, to view, or to look at, behold, perceive, to know, be aware of, to shine, to speak. In its derived form it could also mean, to know or find out, to greet, express congratulations.

What is being seen is the (Lokah). Lokah means the world, the samsarah or the world which one sees. Lokah can also mean the earth, the terrestrial world. The word would mean "a mythical mountain that encircles the earth and is situated beyond the sea of fresh water, which surrounds the last of the seven continents. Beyond there is complete darkness and this side of it, there is light. It thus divides the visible world from the regions of darkness."⁴ According to Hindu understanding, there are fourteen worlds, seven above the earth and seven below the earth,⁵ though roughly we speak about three worlds. Therefore, what we see is not just the seen world, but all the worlds that we can perceive, that is, both seen and unseen.

Popular Meaning

Though Lokasangraha means the 'well-being of the worlds,' it has been understood by various people according to the vision they had. Sarikaracarya translates this word negatively, that is, "the prevention of mankind from going astray."⁶ The purpose behind this is the supremacy of jnanamarga and the world as may a. Ramanujacarya keeping the same pace organic interconnectedness is understood as the interconnection between all the beings in the universe which is organic in nature. In other words, the organic interconnectedness refers to the internal and integral unity.⁷ Accordingly, dharma has to be understood on the background of the living cosmos and with its interconnection and interdependence in the micro as well as macro aspects of the universe.

Thus, dharma according to the Gita is that which 'holds together'.⁸ It holds together the people and cosmos, like the beads in a chain.⁹ It is not only the humans but also the whole of cosmic reality and its interconnectedness, its ethical and ritual practices. The Lord is the one who is the origin of the whole world and also its dissolution. Jnanesvara, the bhakti saint of Maharashtra, commenting on this verse speaks of man and nature as interdependent and part and parcel of the Divine Being. He says that as the golden beads hemmed in a golden string, so too the entire universe is upheld by the Lord (JnanesvarT 7:32).¹⁰ Thus, there is a comprehensive outlook in the concept of dharma.

Significance of Lokasangraha in the Contemporary World

Working for the welfare of the worlds is a duty of every human being. In the words of the Gita. "the one who does not help to keep the wheel of creation in motion by sacrificial duty, and who rejoices in sense pleasures, that sinful person lives in vain."¹¹ The duty arises only from a moral perspective but also from the very ontology of our being. It is here that authenticity comes in.

The reason why one is here on the earth is due to one's karma. "Human beings are bound by karma" (III.9) whether we like it or not. Depending on our actions, we acquire fruit, good or bad. Here, the Gita gives a new interpretation for the karma theory. It is, "not all actions are binding, but only those that are done with a selfish motive. Actions done with no selfish motives (nis-kama-karma) are not only does not bind the agent [are not only not binding the agent], but are

even means of liberation (moksa-sadhana)” says Thomas Kochumuttom.¹² Therefore, by performing one’s own dharma for the well-being of creation one can liberate oneself and the other.

Personal Welfare

There is a saying, “the road to the neighbour’s house passes through my courtyard.” Similarly there is another saying, “if I am alright, everything is alright.” If I want to see the whole world to be perfect, growing and dynamic, first and foremost I myself need to be so. Through the colored glass one sees everything colored. Sebastian Painadath puts this very clearly, “One has to liberate oneself from the possessive grip of I and mine”¹³ the devotee is, “free from (the notion of) T and ‘my,’ even-minded in pain and pleasure, forgiving...” Therefore, Lokasangraha first and foremost aim, at one’s personal welfare both at the personal level and at the inter-personal level.

Moral Welfare

Manusmṛti speaks of sadacara or good conduct (Manu. II.6) as the root of dharma. Dharma can be translated as the rules of conduct fixed by revered people which are handed down to the generation. In fact, Yajñavalkya Smṛti defines dharma as sadacara, “the practice or good conduct of good men; what seems pleasant to one’s self, and the desire that springs from mature consideration.”¹⁴

Sadacara is right conduct to be followed in the dharma. Dharma can be defined as, the eternal law governing, upholding, and supporting the creation and the world order. It is relationship between the creator and the creatures. It also means way of life, duty, righteousness, ideal conduct, virtue, nature, quality, moral principles and truth.¹⁵ In the light of this, but “engaging in the welfare of all the creatures” that is, one unites in the Lord. (XII.4).

sadacara of the Sadacari (the one who is selflessly engaged in (he welfare) is directed not only towards the people but also towards the non-people as well - the cosmos and divine. A person who is morally sound (ethical) will not degrade the other. They will consider the whole existence as divine. The welfare has to become like Kantian categorical a priori and a posteriori imperative.¹⁶ The personal welfare paves the way for all other welfares.

Social Welfare

Society cannot be perceived without the individuals, so too, religion and politics. Everyone is a pilgrim, journeying towards a common destiny. As a pilgrim, one needs to purify oneself and the other to reach the destiny. In the process, we make the world a better place, a better tomorrow for the next generation and above all, create a Janakarajya (Kingdom of Janaka).

CONCLUSION

Materialistic dimensions alone will not help humans to achieve their higher order goals. I don’t mean to advocate any religion specific for spiritual dimension. But the humanity by itself do have the spiritual dimension. If that is enhanced then sustainability and justice by default will be the core of society. The concept Lokasangraha advocate the welfare of all irrespective of cast and creed, nationality and any other differentiating factors that exist in the world.

REFERENCES

1. Agarwal, "Manasa Evam Gita", 7." There is a significant social thought behind the Lokasahgraha ideology of the Gita. The Gita teaches us that in order to maintain the social order it is important that every pays attention to the common welfare. Neither during the Vedic time this type of clear social vision was there, nor did the thinkers of the Upani\$adic time give prominence to social uplift Lokamanya Tilak clarified the essence of welfare described in the Gita which was indeed a new message for the dinkers of the nation."
2. Vecraswamy Krishnaraj. "Bhagavad Gita": Sanskrit and English Word for Word Transliteration [book on-line], (USA, 2009). Available from <http://www.bhagavadgitausa.com/bg-Sans-Sample.htm> (accessed on 02/February. 2018),79. In fact. Tilak uses this meaning when he speaks of 'universal welfare' or the Lokasahgraha' in his Gita-Rahasaya.
3. *The Student's Sanskrit - English Dictionary*. See under the word, 'Lok' Also see, William Dwight I Whitney, *The Roots. Verb-Forms and Primary Derivatives of the Sanskrit Language* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass I Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2006), see under the root, "lok and loc", p.150-151.
4. The Student's Sanskrit-English Dictionary. See under the word 'lok'.
5. The seven worlds above and the seven worlds below the earth .
6. Swai Gambhirananda, "*Srimad Bhagavad Gita*": *English Translation of Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary* (Project Gutenberg, n.d.), 132. Mahadeva Sastri translates this as, "The purpose of preventing the masses from resorting to a wrong path," see, A. Mahadeva Sastri, *The Bhagavad Gita, with the Commentary of Sri Sankaracarya* (Mysore: G.T.A Printing Works, 1901), p. 93-95.
7. The *Rgvedic* hymn, the *Purusasukta* is a coherent articulation of the organic unity. Here it clearly indicates the visible and the invisible, and the mortal and immortal and the God-man-cosmos unity. It is in this Organic Oneness that the metaphor of four *varnas* is to be understood. This evokes the experience of harmony, organic interdependence and interconnection. There is a tendency to interpret this metaphor in terms of hierarchical structure it denotes.
8. MBh. VIII.49,50.
9. BG.VII.7. The scientists are trying to build a theory which would explain all the phenomena of the forces of nature, called the 'GUT Theory' (Grand Unifying Theory). The unifying forces are: Gravity, Strong and Weak Electromagnetic, Weak and Strong Nuclear forces. In the spiritual sense, it is the Divine force which unites the devotee and the Lord.
10. Joshi, A. Shubhada , "*God, Man and Nature: Perspective of Bhagavadgita*," Gen's 17, no. 3 (7 January 2009), p.33.
11. Prasad, 48. (BG.IEL16.).
12. Kochumuttom, Thomas, "*Bhagavad - Gita's Ideal of a Prophet - Contemplative*," *Third Millennium* no. 3 (July-September 2005), p.58.

13. Painadath, Sebastian, "*Does the Gita Advocate Violence?*," *Inanadeepa, Pune Journal of Religious* 5, no. 2 (July 2002), p.27.
14. Usha Choudhuri and Indra Nath Choudhri, "*Hinduism: A Way of Life and a Mode of Thought*", (New Delhi: Niyogi books, 2012), p.98.
15. Prasad, p.15.
16. Whether one likes it or not, the ethical principle of duty to take care of the other is itself an *apriori*. It exists irrespective of one's belief or judgement. As an experimental and inter-related reality, the same duty becomes a necessary prerogative of one's existence and therefore, *aposteriori*.