

THE PHILOSOPHY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF LOKASANGRAHA (THE WELFARE OF THE WORLDS) IN THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ: EXEGETICAL AND HERMENEUTICAL EXPLORATION

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Abstract

The Bhagavadgītā is the foundational text of Vedāntic Philosophy and well-acclaimed scripture of majority of Hindus. The Gītā has been the cause of liberation for many people over the centuries. Gandhi called it 'Mother.' It dispels the darkness of the reader. The welfare termed in this scripture is 'Lokasangraha' which can be the semantic axis of the Gītā. All the 18 yogas and three distinct paths –Jñāna, Karma and Bhakti mentioned here aim at the welfare of whole reality: seen and unseen. This enables one to interpret the term, Lokasangraha in the verse 20 and 25 of Chapter III from Cosmotheandric perspective.

In the modern scientific, technological, and globalized era, there is a steep decline in moral, religious, cultural, and spiritual values. The orderly cosmos is being alienated, and the environment is being degraded. Political, economic, social, educational, psychological, intellectual, and ethical life is in crisis. This poses a serious threat to the welfare of the world. Once religion and the religious scriptures start legitimizing oppression, the cosmic balance will be in jeopardy. If this devaluation is allowed to continue in the present cadence, no doubt the world order will soon collapse. However, a solution for this is being offered by the Gītā in the form of an ideal called Lokasangraha. Thus the message of the Gītā which was written two millennia ago can still become relevant for today's society. By excavating the philosophy, through the exegetical and hermeneutical analysis, an attempt is made to address these issues and bring an order in society.

Keywords:

Lokasangraha, welfare, Bhagavadgītā, ātma-mukti, para-mukti, moral welfare, political welfare, ecological welfare, social welfare, liberation, dharma, advaita, viśiṣṭādvaita, dvaita

Introduction

Gītā is a book of holistic welfare, not only the welfare of humans, but also of non-humans. This holistic welfare is termed, “*Lokasangraha*” in the *Gītā*. The welfare referred to is the wholesome welfare of every aspect of reality: seen and unseen, micro and macrocosm, animate and inanimate, human and divine. In the words of Raimon Panikkar it aims at the cosmotheandric welfare.¹ Hence, the name “*Lokasangraha, the welfare of the worlds.*”

The *Lokasangraha* concept is a dynamic social thinking. It is an important social awareness, opines Sathya Prakash Agarwal. According to him, there is a significant social thought behind the *Lokasangraha* ideology of the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* teaches us that in order to maintain the social order it is important that every person 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 *Upaniṣadic* time give prominence to social uplift. Lokamānya Tilak clarified the essence of welfare described in the *Gītā* which was indeed a new message for the thinkers of the nation.²

Though the religious practices and worship patterns have increased in society, a near-total collapse of ethical values in society in the form of various kinds of corruption – social, moral, economic and political - is all-pervasive. It has become part of our life-style. Religion has become an ‘external label’ rather than an ‘inner virtue’ - a profession. Holy places, places of pilgrimages have become ‘entry points’ to heaven and hell.³ Therefore, there is a pressing need to reinterpret the ‘the concept of *Lokasangraha*’ as understood by the modern thinkers in the contemporary struggle against the social evils and injustice.

A. Lokasangraha –Exegesis and Hermeneutics

To unravel the philosophy and significance of *lokasangraha* we study the text and its meaning.

¹ *Cosmotheandricism* is a term coined by Raimon Panikkar to denote the complex inter-relatedness between nature (cosmos), divine (Theos) and humans (Anthropos). For more details, see, Raimundo Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emerging Religious Consciousness* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993). Also see, Isaac Parackal, "Cosmotheandric Vision: Authenticity with Authority," *Authentic Existence: A Philosophical Probe, Festschrift in Honour of Dr. Johnson J. Puthenpurackal, Ofmcap.*, ed. George Panthamackel (Eluru, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, ACPI Publications, 2012).

² Sathya P. Agarwal, *Mānasa Evam Gītā ... Lokamangala Guṇjīta* (Columbia: Urmila Agarwal Publishers, 1998), 7. “गीता के लोकसंग्रह सिद्धान्त के पीछे एक महत्वपूर्ण सामाजिक चिंतन है। गीता यह सिखाती है कि सामाजिक व्यवस्था को सुचारु रूप से चलाने के लिए प्रत्येक व्यक्ति के द्वारा लोकहित पर ध्यान देना आवश्यक है। वेदों के समय में इस प्रकार का व्यापक दृष्टिकोण स्पष्ट नहीं हुआ था। और न ही उपनिषदों के सूक्ष्म विचारकों ने सामाजिक उत्थान को प्राथमिकता दी। गीता में वर्णित लोकहित के भावों को स्पष्ट किया लोकमान्य तिलक ने और देश के विचारकों के लिए यह एक नया संदेश ही था।”

³ R.S Garg, *Gītā for Success in Modern Life: From Basement to Boardroom* (New Delhi: New Age Books, 2004), 14.

1. The Text

There are only two instances, the word ‘*Lokasangraha*’ is used explicitly besides many implicit references. In both the places, it means ‘the welfare of the worlds.’

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि सम्पश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ III.20

Janaka and his like certainly attained perfection (emancipation) only by resorting to duty (actions). You too ought to perform the duty holding / keeping in view the welfare of the worlds (BG. III.20).

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् । III.25

O Arjuna, as the unenlightened perform with attachment to their work; the enlightened perform for the welfare of the worlds without adhering to their work⁴ (BG. III.25).

2. The Setting

Seeing the teachers, elders, relatives and people against whom he is going to fight, Arjuna holds back from fighting (Chapter I). Essentially, this fight is a fight for justice or for a social good (*dharma-yuddha*). The social good here is the protection of one’s home-land from illegitimate and evil rulers. Arjuna being from a warrior class, it is his *dharma* and duty (*kṣatriya-dharma*) to fight. Now, Kṛṣṇa reminds him of his duty (Chapter II) and says that *jñānāyoga* is superior to *karmayoga*. To this, Arjuna replies, “If *jñānāyoga* is superior to *karmayoga*, why do you instruct me to work?” (III.1). “No one can remain action-less. All are driven to work” (III.5), answers the Lord. It is better to work than to keep idle (III.8). Even *yajña* is work. By *yajña* one sustains the creation. If one does not contribute to the wheel of creation by sacrificial duty, then his living is in vain (III.16). Only for a wise or liberated person or a *sthītaprajña* there is no duty. However, he works not for his sake but for the sake of the others, for the welfare of the ‘wheel of creation.’ It is only the unwise that work with desire. Janaka is wise, self-realized, yet he continued his work for others. Arjuna, ‘you are not unwise, you are wise,’ therefore, “if you consider the welfare of the worlds, then you should work” (III.20), you should do your duty, however, “not for yourself, but for the sake of others” (III.25).

⁴ Translation is mine. For the meaning of the words, cf. V.S. Apte, *The Student’s Sanskrit – English Dictionary* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1991). Also see, Veeraswamy Krishnaraj. *Bhagavad-Gita: Sanskrit and English Word for Word Translation* [Book-online], 2009. <http://www.bhagavadgitausa.com/bg-Sans-Sample.html>, internet [accessed 2 February 2012].

3. The Analysis

The word *Lokasangraha* is derived from two words: *lokaḥ* and *sangraha*. The root word for *lokaḥ* is *lok*. In its present tense it becomes *lokate*, in the future tense, *lokiṣyate* / *alokitā* and in the past tense, *alokat*. The verbal form is *lokitem*. *Lok* means, ‘to see’ or ‘to consider, to view.’ *Lokayati – te, lokita* means ‘to look at, behold, perceive, to know, be aware of, to shine, to speak’ (*lokitya*). In its derived form (*lokita*) it could also mean, ‘to know or find out, to greet and express congratulations.’⁵

What is being seen is the *Lokaḥ* - the world, the *samsāraḥ* or the world which one sees. *Lokaḥ* can also mean the earth, the terrestrial world (*bhūlokaḥ*). The word *lokālokaḥ* 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 *lokālokaḥ* there is complete darkness and this side of it, there is light. Thus, it divides the visible world from the regions of darkness.”⁶ According to Hindu understanding, there are fourteen worlds, seven above the earth and seven below the earth,⁷ though roughly we speak about three worlds – *svarga*, *prthvi* and *pātāla*. Therefore, what we see is not just the seen world (*dr̥ṣṭaloka*), but all the worlds that we can perceive (*adr̥ṣṭaloka*).

The word *sangraha* finds its root in the word *grah* which is very close to another root, *gr/gir*. *Grah* means ‘to tie’ or ‘to seize’ or ‘to bond’ like compiling a book. The root *gr/gir* means ‘to swallow.’ The prefix ‘*sa*’ is indeclinable and is also termed as ‘*saha*’ added to nouns to form an adjective or adverb in the sense of ‘with, together with, along with, accompanied by, having or possessed of.’ Thus, when added to the derived root ‘*grah*’ the word *sangraha* is obtained. It means, ‘seizing, grasping, clenching or gripping, guarding, protecting, favouring, propitiating, entertaining, supporting, storing, accumulating, gathering, collecting, governing, restraining, controlling, comprehending, abridging, blending etc.’⁸

Thus, *Lokasangraha* means *lokānām sangrahaḥ*, collecting / protecting the worlds together, or guarding or protecting the world together or maintenance of various worlds. In the derived sense one could express it as “Holding the worlds together” or the “Welfare of the

⁵ *The Student’s Sanskrit – English Dictionary*. See under the word, “लोक”. Also see, William Dwight Whitney, *The Roots, Verb-Forms and Primary Derivatives of the Sanskrit Language* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2006), see under the root, “lok and loc”, 150-51.

⁶ *The Student’s Sanskrit – English Dictionary*. See under the word लोकः।

⁷ The seven world above and the seven worlds below the earth are, भूर्लोक, भुवर्लोक, स्वर्लोक, महर्लोक, जनर्लोक, तपर्लोक, सत्यलोक and अतल, वितल, सतल, रसातल, तलातल, महातल, पाताल।

⁸ Whitney, see under the word, 'grah', p. 39-41. *The Student’s Sanskrit – English Dictionary*. See under the words स and संग्रह. Also see, Agarwal, *The Social Role of the Gītā: How and Why*, 296.

worlds.”⁹ 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.*

Śankarācārya translates this word negatively, “*losaya unmārga pravṛttinivāraṇam lokasangraha*”¹⁰ that is, “the prevention of mankind from going astray.” The purpose behind this is the supremacy of *jñānamārga* and the world as *māyā*.¹¹ However, Śankara does not explain or define *Lokasangraha* in the v.25. He keeps the word as it is. Śankara intends *Lokasangraha* at the realm of knowledge. Through right reasoning one can establish the goodness and harmony in the world. Right knowledge can take away ignorance. The knowledge one acquires should be engaged for the welfare of the world.

Rāmānujācārya keeping the same pace with Śankarācārya, twists a wee bit, “for the guidance of the world.”¹² According to Rāmānujācārya, one who is not qualified¹³ for the *jñānayoga* has no alternative but to take refuge in *karmayoga*.¹⁴ Even those that are qualified for *jñānayoga*, such as Janaka, have adopted *karmayoga* because the latter is the superior course. Apart from qualification or no qualification for *jñānayoga*, anyone who occupies the position of a leader and whose example will weigh with the public, must engage in work for the guidance and protection of the world (*lokarakṣārtham*), that is, work in the interest of order and progress. The word used for the purpose of welfare is ‘लोकरक्षार्थ’,¹⁵ that is ‘for the

⁹ Krishnaraj, 79. In fact, Tilak uses this meaning when he speaks of ‘universal welfare’ or the ‘*Lokasangraha*’ in his *Gītā-Rahasaya*.

¹⁰ Śankarācārya, *Śrībhagavadgītābhāṣyam*, Vol. I (Srirangam: Sri Vani Vilas Press, n.d.), 135.

¹¹ Mahadeva Śāstri translates this as, “The purpose of preventing the masses from resorting to a wrong path,” see, A. Mahādeva Śāstri, *The Bhagavad Gītā, with the Commentary of Sri Śankarācārya* (Mysore: G.T.A Printing Works, 1901), 93-95.

¹² C.M Padmanabhachar, *A Critical Study of Bhagavad Geeta: In the Light of Sri Madhva's Commentaries Compared with Those of Other Schools*, First ed. (Madras: The Law Printing House, 1916), 506.

¹³ ‘*Śūdra* is not qualified, because he is not capable. *Brahma-vidyā* needs a knowledge of the highest *Ātmā*, His nature and the modes of meditating on Him; and as a help to it, one has the daily recitation of the *Veda* and performance of *yajña*. The *Śūdra* does not possess this knowledge and is not qualified for the *yajñas*. The incapacity comes from the fact that he has not learnt the *Veda*. Among the other three castes it is found and therefore, they are qualified.’ See, Diwan Bahadur V.K. Ramanujachari, *Śrī Bhāṣyam: Translated into English*, II Vols., Vol. I (Kumbakonam: Published by the Author, 1930), 353.

¹⁴ Some authors claim that Arjuna is of this class. But according to *Śrī Bhāṣya*, only *Brāhmaṇa*, *Ṛṣatriya* and *Vaiśya* qualify. Thus, their claim that Arjuna is ‘unqualified’ is a wrong reading of the *Gītā* according to *Viśiṣṭādvaita*.

¹⁵ अथापि लोकरक्षार्थं कर्मण्येव वर्ते। संग्रहशब्देन लोकरञ्जनादिभ्रमव्युदासायाह धर्मनिश्चयमिति। लोकस्य संग्रहणमेकीकृत्य स्वीकरणम्। Rāmānujācārya and Deśika, *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā: Śrībhagavadrāmānujabhāṣyaṇa, Kavītārkkikasimha Sarvatantrasvatantra Śrīmadveṅkaṭ anātha Vedāntadeśika Viracitayātadvyākhyayā Tātparyacandrikayā: Sampādakīyarasāsvādākhya-ṭippaṇena ca sametā*, (Madras: Ubhayavedānta Granthamālā, 1972), 124.

protection of the world.’ In the words of Deśika, “for the protection of the world, all the work that is suitable to one’s caste and order of life should be always performed by a distinguished man who is well known for his wisdom. Otherwise, the sin produced from ruining the world will bring him down even from *Jñāna-yoga*.”¹⁶

The word, अविद्वांसो has to be understood from the *Viśiṣṭādvaitic* point of view. The translation given by Sampatkumaran is ‘unlearned’ as compared to the ‘unenlightened’ of *Kevala Advaita*. They are the ones who do not know the entire truth about the self. They have, “attachment to work,”¹⁷ unescapably associated with work. In the modern terminology they are the ‘workaholics.’ Since they have wrongly understood their self, they are not qualified for the *jñānayoga*. Nonetheless, they are qualified for *karmayoga*. But the ‘learned,’ who already know the entire truth about the self, work for the protection of the people. If such people choose to be so by their own virtuous code of conduct, they should practice only *karmayoga* even though they are qualified for the *jñānayoga*.

Madhvācārya goes along with the etymological understanding which is more in line with the former *ācārya*. However, unlike Śankara, for Madhva the world is seen as the manifestation of *Brahman*, which can be best understood by the relation, ‘*samavāya*’ that is, from *bimba-pratibimba bhāva*. In the light of this, *Lokasangraha* is translated as, “welfare of the world,”¹⁸ and is explained as, “to live in the world without being entangled in its turmoil.”¹⁹ This is because, the whole world is an image of the Divine and therefore, it needs to be taken care.

This implies that one who is engaged in *karma*, should not run away from the situation. Just as each part of the body contributes to the well-being of the totality of the body, so too every good act of human being contributes to the welfare of the totality of reality. Selfless act (*niṣkāmakarma*) would enable the person attain salvation (*mukti*) or the *vaikuṇṭha*. The example set before us is Janaka, the father of Sīta who in spite of being old, chose the ascetic life and ruled the kingdom. Further, Padmanabhachar explains this from the *Dvaita* point of view that in the Chapter 18 of *Śānti Parva* Arjuna tells his brother Yudhiṣṭira

¹⁶ M.R. Sampatkumaran (trns.), *The Gitabhashya of Ramanuja*, (Madras: Prof. M. Rangacharya Memorial Trust, 1969), 92.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 95. This gives a new dimension to the *Lokasangraha*, i.e., a sociological one. It also paves the way for the management and the various leaders of society in various streams.

¹⁸ Padmanabhachar, 502.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 503.

how the wife of Janaka²⁰ dissuaded her husband when he was about to renounce the world and go for *sannyāsa*. She tells him that he should rule the kingdom without any self-love or egotism, thereby pleasing God and doing his duty. This is the reason, the particle, ‘*hi*’, ‘verily,’ is stressed, saying, “you know it very well, my dear friend.”²¹

Thus, one can argue along with Madhva, that Arjuna has to wage war, not because he is a *kṣatriya*,²² but because it is a way of showing devotion to God. And doing this, he aids in preserving the harmony of the world. The world needs control and guidance for its moral and spiritual evolution and progress. If the seer detaches himself from the active life and takes the ascetic life, though he attains the Divine Light, he is lost to the humanity. The ignorant world has to be taken by the hand and guided carefully along the paths of unselfish work, like the elders who hold the hands of younger ones and lead the way. Seers should do this. After having the realization of oneself, one needs to show the way for others. It is the duty of the realized ones. Thus, the order and progress is maintained. This is *Lokasan*□*graha*.

Winthrop Sargeant (1903-1986), an eminent scholar, translates *Lokasangraha* as ‘maintenance of the world.’ This is how he parses and defines the word, “*loka* (m.), world. *samgraham* (m. acc. sg.), holding together, maintenance. *loka-samgraham* (m. acc. sg. TP cpd.), maintenance of the world.”²³ Here, Sargeant views the concept as singular and masculine. But the concept is much more than that. Looking at the multiple realms meaning, that is, ‘worlds,’ the word cannot be just masculine or feminine. That would restrict the meaning to a certain domain. For example, Indians call our home land India as ‘mother land’ and therefore, it is feminine. The Germans call the home land as ‘father land’ and therefore, it is masculine. Therefore, we need a word which would encompass both masculine and feminine. Neuter gender could be the alternative. Therefore, the analysis given by Sargeant is insufficient.

²⁰ In the words of Padmanabhachar, the word, ‘Janaka’ may be a generic title of Mithila’s monarchs, transmitted in a long line.

²¹ Padmanabhachar, 502.

²² This is the position held by *Advaita* of Śankara. According to this school, Janaka is a *Kṣatriya* king. According to the *Dharmaśāsthra*, Asceticism, the fourth *Ashrama* is barred to the *Kṣatriyas*. Being born as the *Kṣatriya* out of *prārabdhakarma*, Arjuna had no other alternative but to engage in military duty and work out his *prārabdhakarma*. Madhva refutes this view, and says that he (Śankara) introduces an unnecessary controversy. See, *ibid.*, 505. For Madhva, God vision or Self-realization has no monopoly of caste.

²³ Winthrop Sargeant (trn.), *The Bhagavad Gītā*, Christopher Key Chapple (ed.), Twenty-fifth Anniversary 2009 ed. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1984), 178. Original italics. The abbreviations imply: m. – masculine, acc. – accusative, sg. – singular, TP cpd. – *Tatpuruṣa* compound. *Tatpuruṣa* compound has two words which ordinarily have different case endings. For example, *jīvaloka* = *jīva* and *loka*.

Vivekananda translates it as, “the stability of human society,” and “well-being of the world.”²⁴ Tilak translates it as, “binding men together, and protecting, maintaining and regulating them in such a way that they might acquire that strength which results from mutual cooperation, thereby putting them on the path of acquiring merit while maintaining their good condition”²⁵ and thus ‘making people wise.’ In the context of freedom struggle, Tilak translates it as, “welfare of a nation.”²⁶ For him it means, the “maintenance of the entire universe,” or the “universal welfare” or the *maintenance of various worlds*.²⁷ Tilak’s concept has a wider application than the other ones. In the words of Tilak, “the phrase ‘*lokasamgraha*’ has a comprehensive meaning, and includes the putting, not only mankind, but the entire world, on a proper path, and making a ‘*samgraha*’ of it, that is, maintaining, feeding, protecting, and defending it in a proper way, without allowing it to be destroyed.”²⁸

The word, *Loka* in *Lokasangraha* does not only indicate humankind but also all the worlds. In the ordinary sense it is ‘the benefit of human beings’ and further the benefit of all the *lokas* (*Bhūrloka*, *Satyaloka*, *Pitṛloka*, *Devaloka* etc), which are created by God. In this sense, *Lokasangraha* has the *comprehensive meaning that the activities of all these various spheres should go on properly in the same way as those of mankind*. G. V. Saroja summarizes this as follows, “...putting, not only mankind, but the entire world, on a proper path, and making a ‘*sangraha*’ of it, that is, maintaining, feeding, protecting, and defending it in a proper way, without allowing it to be destroyed.”²⁹ Thus, it is said, ‘*lokānām sangrahaḥ*, that is maintenance of the various worlds. Though Tilak has given a better concept, yet it is biased, because, what he considers welfare, is only of the visible world or about the nation though he mentions the other invisible worlds. He failed to recognize the universal application in his writings, deeds and speeches.’³⁰

²⁴ Swami Madhuranada, *Bhagavad Gita as Viewed by Swami Vivekananda*, 2011 ed. (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2009; reprint, 2011), 65, 68.

²⁵ Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā Rahasya or Karma Yoga Śāstra*, trans., Bhalchandra Sitaram Sukthankar, 2007 ed., 2 Vols., Vol. I (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1935). Also see, *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* (New Delhi: India Heritage Research Foundation in association with Rupa and Co, 2011), s.v. "Lokasamgraha: Welfare of the World."

²⁶ Sathya P. Agarwal, *The Social Role of the Gītā: How and Why* (Columbia: Urmila Agarwal Publishers, 1993), 296-297.

²⁷ Tilak, Vol. I, 457.

²⁸ Ibid., Vol. II, 927. I have maintained the original transliteration here.

²⁹ G.V Saroja, *Tilak and Sankara on the Gita* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1985), 57.

³⁰ Ibid., Vol. I, 457. Tilak’s whole life and struggle is for the welfare of the country or for the freedom of India. The biographical details will make it clear. For more details see, D.V. Athalye, *The Life of Lokamanya Tilak* (Poona: Annasahib Chiploonkar, 1921).

Dr. Radhakrishnan interprets *Lokasangraha* as the “world-maintenance.”³¹ He sees in this concept a call to rise above narrow visions that seek comfort in merely doing duty to family, neighbours, city or the state. He says, “*Lokasangraha* stands for the unity of the world, the interconnectedness of society...”³² Further he emphasizes on “world-solidarity” and “Change of the whole pattern of our life.”³³ Often times though we see the wrong being done at our homes against women, children, ill treatment in various fields, even when knowing that it is wrong, we remain passive. *Lokasangraha* is a challenge for us here, says Radhakrishnan, towards the human brotherhood, “the aim of religion is to spiritualize society, to establish a brotherhood on earth. We must be inspired by the hope of embodying ideals in earthly institutions.”³⁴ In the present scenario, where democracy has become confused with the disbelief in the political leaders, *Lokasangraha* becomes an ideal tool to uphold goodness of democracy in the form of the great people who lived the ideal.

In fact, Zaehner while translating the word *Lokasangraha* into English, feels that the word “coherence” would be a better word, as it is more consonant with the etymology of the word.³⁵ But again, this word sounds more of secular nature and therefore does not give a comprehensive texture. Therefore, I prefer the word *welfare*.

Gandhi links this concept to *yajña*. *Yajña* is primarily understood as sacrifice. One has to sacrifice oneself for the sake of a greater good, the welfare of the country. Sri Aurobindo translates it as ‘the holding together of the peoples.’ The word ‘peoples’ effectively conveys the multiple realm meaning here. For Vinoba Bhave, it is ‘keeping people together and on the right path.’³⁶ Thus, one can conclude that the concept *Lokasangraha* is a wider concept which underlines the importance of well-being of every being in the universe. Since these people were spiritual persons in their very being, they saw a spiritual dimension in it.

Francis X. D’Sa uses the plural form for *Loka*, thus giving a wider application: “*Lokasangraha* refers to the welfare of *all the Lokas, that is, all the universes*. The Hindu traditions do not and cannot have any other ideal. Because their world vision is cosmocentric, not anthropocentric; welfare is not restricted to humans alone, much less to some class of

³¹ S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgītā: With an Introductory Essay, Sanskrit Text, English Translation and Notes*, 1977 ed. (Bombay: Blackie and Son India Limited, 1948), 139. Italics mine.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 69.

³⁴ Ibid., 140.

³⁵ R.C Zaehner, *The Bhagavad-Gīta: With a Commentary Based on the Original Sources* (Oxford, London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 169.

³⁶ Agarwal, *The Social Role of the Gītā: How and Why*, 298-99.

humans.”³⁷ There is a plurality of meaning here, ranging from the visible and experiential realm to the invisible yet to be experienced realm. Thus, there is an ‘inclusive’ and not ‘exclusive’ approach here which is the wider application we are seeking for.

Raimon Panikkar draws a secular meaning to *Lokasangraha* from the etymology. In his words, the derivative meaning of *loka* could be, “open space, room, place, scope, free motion, world, wide space, the realm of the secular, *saeculum*, the temporal...” One need to hold together the world, otherwise, it “would fall apart”³⁸ writes Panikkar. In the Panikkarian language, one needs to hold on to the totality of the world and its web of interconnectedness. To summarize, the *Lokasangraha* refers to the well-being of all beings of the cosmos, both animate and inanimate.

B. 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 Gītā, “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.”³⁹ The duty arises not only from a moral perspective but also from the very ontology of our being. It is here the authenticity comes in.

1. Personal Welfare

The road to the neighbor’s house passes through my courtyard. Similarly, 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*.”⁴⁰ The devotee is, “free from (the notion of) ‘I’ and ‘my,’ even-minded in pain and pleasure, forgiving...”⁴¹ Therefore, *Lokasangraha* first and foremost aims at one’s personal welfare both at the personal level and at the inter-personal level.

³⁷ Francis X. D'Sa, "Lokasangraha: The Welfare of the Whole World, a Hindu Vision of a World Order," *Jnanadeepa, Pune Journal of Religious Studies* 2, no. 1 (1999), 52. Italics mine.

³⁸ Raimundo Panikkar, *The Vedic Experience, Mantramāñjari: An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man and Contemporary Celebration*, 2006 ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1977), 431. See the footnotes, 20-25 of the book.

³⁹ Ramananda Prasad, *The Bhagavad-Gītā: The Song of God* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2010), 48. एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः। अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति॥ (BG.III.16.).

⁴⁰ Sebastian Painadath, "Does the Gita Advocate Violence?," *Jnanadeepa, Pune Journal of Religious Studies* 5, no. 2 (July 2002), 27.

⁴¹ निर्ममो निरहंकारः समुदुःखसुखः क्षमी॥ BG. XII.13.

1.1 Ātma-mukti

The story of Arjuna's feeling dejected is in fact a reality of inner conflict in every human being. There is a greater struggle within a person. The battle of *dharma* and *adharma* is 'fought daily and hourly' in the hearts of human beings.⁴² Aurobindo visualizes this aspect in the Gītā: "Life is a battle and a field of death – this is Kurukshetra. War and destruction are not only a universal material aspects, but also of our mental and moral existence... It is self-evident that in the actual life of man intellectual, social, political, moral we can make no real step forward without a struggle, a battle between what exists and lives, and what seeks to exist and live and between all that stands behind either."⁴³ The difficulty in preferring good over evil is due to the lack of understanding of one's own self. According to *Advaitic* understanding the real self is in darkness. Liberation is attained when the soul realizes its real nature. *Lokasangraha* posits a way-out from this tension and marches towards one's end.

The inner conflict is depicted in the usage of various terms throughout the Gītā. In fact, the whole of chapter XVI enumerates various attitudes and qualities one possesses. Hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, anger, harshness, ignorance, insatiable desires (*kāma*), holding wrong views, stubbornness, tit-for-tat attitude, resentment, egoism, power, lust, delusion (*moha*), violence, weakness, pain, destruction etc are termed as the demoniac qualities. The good qualities are shown in terms of *daya*, *karuṇa*, purity of heart, charity, fearlessness, austerity, honesty, splendor, forgiveness, fortitude, non-violence, gentleness, cleanliness, sacrifice and equanimity. These are termed as the divine qualities.

The inner self has to be understood first. 'Knowing self' necessarily is a point of departure towards universality. In the words of Īśopaniṣad, "a person who sees whole reality in his own self, and in the whole reality his self, does not suffer/hate/feel revulsion anymore."⁴⁴ Arjuna realizes that he is in dilemma and therefore, seeks advice from the Lord. There are various tools and means to know one's own self, viz., scriptures, traditions, *smṛti* and *āptavākya* from the scholars. For some people, these means are sufficient. They are the *jñānamārga* for them.

Often, people who are engrossed in the material world find it difficult to come out of it. Arjuna is one such. In society they are like the drug addicts, alcoholics, sexoholics, maniacs etc. Often they may be literate or aware of scriptural teachings and at times able to

⁴² Radhakrishnan, 79.

⁴³ Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, 2003), 37-39.

⁴⁴ यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति । सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते । Īśa. 6. Translation is mine.

have good discretion of knowledge, but are unable to come out of it. Such people require the grace of God. It will be given to them, provided they ‘unconditionally surrender at the feet of the Lord,’ knowing their own weaknesses. The Lord Himself says, “Setting aside all Dharma, just surrender completely to My will (with firm faith and loving contemplation), I shall liberate you from all sins (or the bonds of Karma). Do not grieve”⁴⁵

Therefore, the first *Lokasangraha* sermon Kṛṣṇa exhorts is the *Ātma-Lokasangraha*. From this self-liberation (*ātmamukti*) one moves towards the well-being of the *other* (*paramukti*). Out of one’s fullness, only fullness comes out.⁴⁶ If one is perfect, what comes out from such a person will be only the perfection, good of all, well-being and blessings. This leads one to the *Paramukti*.

1.2 Paramukti

A person who considers the well-being of others in oneself is “*ātmaupamyā*”⁴⁷ meaning, ‘equality of others with oneself.’ He is on the road to self-realization, ‘a perfect *yogi*’ says the Lord Kṛṣṇa, “One is considered the best *yogi* who regards everything like oneself, and can feel the pain and pleasure of others as one’s own, O Arjuna”⁴⁸ Such a person has great compassion for all beings, has desire of well-being of all. In the words of Śankara, “he sees that whatever is pleasant to himself is pleasant to all creatures, and that whatever is painful to him is painful to all beings.”⁴⁹ If one desires good to oneself, one desires good to all. Thus, the person is led to *mokṣa*.

Agarwal in his *Social Message of the Gita* affirms that those who attain perfection have similar traits whether they are *jñānayogins*, *bhaktas* or *karmayogins*. All have peace of mind, all are tranquil in spirit, and above all, they engage in *Lokasangraha*. They maintain peace of mind in the midst of struggles, they continuously wage war for social justice, harmony, unity and welfare, particularly of the subaltern people.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ “सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज । अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः । (BG.XVIII.66).

⁴⁶ ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते । The invocatory *śloka* of *Īśa Upaniṣad*.

⁴⁷ Literally, the word “आत्मौपम्येन” means, ‘by comparison with oneself only.’ The one who compares others to oneself, is called आत्मौपम्य । This is the concept Gandhiji picks up from the *Gītā* for his philosophy of *satyāgraha* (seeking of truth) and non-violence and equates with *Yajña*. Thus, the *karma* becomes *yajña* when performed with the vision of well-being of others.

⁴⁸ आत्मौपम्येन समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन । सुखं वा यदि दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः । (BG.VI. 32).

⁴⁹ Sathya P. Agarwal, *The Social Message of the Gita Symbolized as Lokasangraha: Self-Composed Sanskrit Ślokas with English Commentary* (Columbia, USA: Urmila Agarwal, 1995), 47. I have retained the spelling of *Lokasangraha* in the title of this book since the author himself is giving it as “Lokasangraha.”

⁵⁰ Agarwal, *The Social Message of the Gita Symbolized as Lokasangraha*, 58. आत्मशान्तिस्तु योगस्य केवलं रूपमांशिकम् । पूर्णत्वं सर्वयोगानां प्राप्तव्यं लोकसंग्रहे ।

At times, the people who work for the welfare like Janaka, have the *efficacy of bearing witness*. This efficacy comes from the person’s inner disposition which the religious people call ‘the spirituality.’ People like Mother Theresa, Baba Amte, Gandhiji and their selfless work have been an inspiration to hundreds and thousands of people around the world when they were alive and even after their death. By liberating oneself, one enables others to liberate (*paramukti*) through their very life. It is like a lighted lamp which enlightens all and those who perceive it do not stumble and fall.

2. Moral Welfare

Sadācāra 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 the eternal relationship between the creator and the creatures. It also means way of life, duty, righteousness, ideal conduct, virtue, nature, quality, moral principles and truth.”⁵¹ In the light of this, by “engaging in the welfare of all the creatures” that is, “*sarvabhutahiteratāḥ*” (XII.4), one unites in the Lord.

Sadācāra of the *Sadācāri* (the one who is selflessly engaged in the welfare) is directed not only towards the people but also towards the non-people as well - the cosmos and the divine. A person who is morally sound (ethical) will not degrade *the other*. They will consider the whole existence as divine which the *Viśiṣṭādvaita* or *Dvaita Vedānta* puts it, “*samānādhikarāṇyam*” or “*bimba-pratibimba bhāva*” respectively. The welfare has to become like Kantian categoric *apriori* and *aposteriori* imperative.⁵² The personal welfare paves the way for all other welfares.

3. Social Welfare

A realized person is a real *karmayogi* in whom all the three paths advocated in the *Gītā* are verified and is able to inspire and bring revolution in society. If the person is not a real *karmayogi*⁵³ then such a person will not be able to inspire people, though they may flock after the person without any conviction. Such people can be termed as *people-without-face*.

⁵¹ Prasad, 15.

⁵² 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 experiential and inter-related reality the same duty becomes a necessary prerogative of one’s existence and therefore, *aposteriori*.

⁵³ As we see many of the modern sadhus or the so called ‘gurus’, social workers who claim that they are the real saviors of the world, are like “seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand” (Mt. 13:13).

For centuries, there were several social evils prevalent in India: child marriage, widow burning (*sati*), *zamindari* system, bonded labour, caste system, dowry, untouchability, sorcery, witchcraft, blind beliefs, prohibition of temple entry and worship, etc. Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) opened a new era of Renaissance movement in India which tickled thousands of persecutors and the persecuted. The people that followed after Roy were, Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1833), Govind Ranade (1842-1901), Ramakrishna (1836-1886), Vivekananda (1863-1902), Tilak (1856-1920), Gandhi (1869-1948), Ambedkar and Annie Besant to name a few.

An important area where people remain backward is due to the lack of education. If the country wants to make progress, education is a basic requirement. Education must not just at the indigenous level, but of international standard. The traditional Sanskrit language which was the hegemony of *Brāhmiṇical* people was replaced by the vernacular and English. Christian missionary schools, Ramakrishna Mission Schools, and colleges came up all around the country. This brought revolution in people's thinking. Tilak, Vivekananda, and Dayananda Saraswati took leading roles in this.

Lokasangraha sets the platform for a citizen to make the country a *Rāmarājya*, 'Reign of Rāma' without looking for a selfish motive, and work for the welfare of it. Thus, it sets a social standard. When a leader observes it, the follower is automatically made to follow. Thus says the *Gītā*, "Whatever noble persons do, others follow. Whatever standards they set up, the world follows"⁵⁴ Gandhi's non-violence movement for freedom in Africa and India is an uncompromised example one can cite here.

There is an added duty of the enlightened person: "to inspire in all the works." "The enlightened one should inspire others by performing all works efficiently without attachment." Agarwal opines that "by adopting the approach of *Gītā*, underlying the word *joṣayet*, Gandhi achieved considerable success in obtaining mass support for his *Satyāgraha* movement."⁵⁵ It is this conviction, the practice and the role model shown by Gandhi that led thousands to follow his footsteps which eventually christened him, '*Mahātmā*.'

One's duty entails serving *the other* throughout one's life. *The other* includes, first and foremost, oneself, then family, society, the divine and cosmos as well. Hence the journey of life is a journey of duties towards every being. In a stricter sense, it is *yajña*, *the cosmic*

⁵⁴ "यद्यादाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः। स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते।।" (BG. III.21). Prasad, 50.

⁵⁵ Agarwal, *The Social Role of the Gītā: How and Why*, 309.

sacrifice where everything is to be *burnt*.⁵⁶ One should work constantly without any expectation in return, like the sun which gives light without any hesitation or like the breeze which blows without any rest or the river which flows without any break.⁵⁷ By His sacrifice Prajāpati created the world and the beings and by our sacrifice we re-recreate the divine. The Gītā explains this in the following manner. In the beginning *Prajāpati*, having created men together with *Yajña* (the selfless work dedicated to God or Vedic sacrifice) as their duty [*dharma*], declared: “By this shall you multiply. May this be to you the Cow of Plenty yielding all your wants!” Further it says, “You cherish the Devas with Yajña, and may the Devas in turn bless you (with rain and other desired gifts)! Thus, mutually cherishing, you shall attain the highest good.”⁵⁸ In other words, by performing our *dharma* faithfully, we partake in the Trinitarian fellowship of God in re-creation, maintenance and sanctification.⁵⁹ Thus, our *svadharma* becomes the work of God (*opus dei*). This is said to be establishing the reign of God.

4. Political Welfare

When we speak of political welfare, it is not what we gain from the country that is important, but what we give to the country. It is our duty to work for the country. *Lokasangraha* is an attitude of ‘selfless giving’ without having any attachment. Vivekananda says, “In whatever you do for a particular person, a city or a state, assume the same attitude as you have towards your children, and expect nothing in return.”⁶⁰

In the contemporary context, in the light of *Lokasangraha* a question arises regarding the emancipatory acts of political leaders. The powerful become more powerful at the expense of the powerless. The leaders, who are supposed to serve, seek to be served. Can we call this *Lokasangraha*: erecting statues of political leaders and their party logos for the sake

⁵⁶ One of the qualities of fire is burning. In *Yājñic* terms, fire burns the impurities and creates anew. Fire also soothes one from chill and gives a pleasant experience. Heat in a harmonic right amount enables life to emerge from the embryo.

⁵⁷ Shubhada A. Joshi, "God, Man and Nature: Perspective of Bhagavadgita," Gen's 17, no. 3 (7 January 2009), 34.

⁵⁸ सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः । अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ।। देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः । परस्परं भावयन्त श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ।। BG. III.10-11.

⁵⁹ The cosmic functions of creation, maintenance, and destruction are personified by the forms of *Brahma* the creator, *Viṣṇu* the maintainer or preserver, and *Śiva* the destroyer or transformer. These three deities have been called ‘the Hindu triad’ (त्रिमूर्ति) or the ‘Great Trinity.’

⁶⁰ Agarwal, *The Social Role of the Gītā: How and Why*, 308.

of vote-bank and development? The word ‘minority’ has become a vote-bank for the powerful. Is this *Lokasangraha* or *svārthasangraha*?⁶¹ It is nothing but deifying oneself.

Holistic development should be the motive of all the political leaders of the country and thereby establish peace and harmony in a vastly diversified country like India. In order to achieve this, at times *a just war* may be required. But it should be the ‘last resort’ when all the other possibilities of establishing peace are tried. And even in this act of just war, care should be taken that the harm done to humanity and cosmos is minimum.

A responsible leader of the country may have to take certain decisions which may disturb some sections of the society. But such decisions should be preceded by an open search for the well-being of all and a sincere dialogue with all parties concerned as the Gītā itself is saying, “that no taint of *kāma*, no element of egoism, should be at work in such decision.”⁶² Therefore, the dominant ethos of the leader should be of equanimity, non-violence, compassion, *dvandvātīta* (II.45, IV.22) attitude, *daya*, *karuṇa* etc.

5. Spiritual Welfare

Religiously speaking, *Lokasangraha* ideal puts one in touch with self, God and cosmos. The central message of every religious scripture is to get immersed in the cosmotheandric vision or getting united with this Trinitarian reality: cosmos, theos and *anthropos*. In the words of Aurobindo, *Lokasangraha* is “a spiritual unity with God and with this world of beings who dwell in him and in whom he dwells.”⁶³

Every aspect of the total reality is very much inter-penetrating and interdependent so that even a leaf from the tree does not fall down without a silent knowledge of the total Reality. The trees, streams, stars and breeze at every moment remind us that they are very much part of this Divine inter-relation. *Rgveda* speaks of *yajña* as a symbol of cosmic order or *ṛta*. In the Gītā, *yajña* is a symbol of *ṛta*. By being nourished by *yajña*, one keeps the order in the creation, in other words, keeps the divinity. One needs to take care of nature as part of one’s daily sacrifice, the *yajña* and *dharma*.

Svadharmā, doing one’s own duty, is an important lesson to be learnt from the perspective of *Lokasangraha*. *Dharma* has to be done without any selfish attachment.

⁶¹ *Svārthasangraha* is the term I coined to signify the selfish greed which tries to amass power, politics, money etc.

⁶² यद् अहंकारम् आश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे। मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस् ते प्रकृतिस् त्वां नियोक्ष्यति।। BG.XVIII.59. Sebastian Painadath, "Does the Gita Advocate Violence?," *Jnanadeepa*, *Pune Journal of Religious Studies* 5, no. 2 (July 2002), 29.

⁶³ Agarwal, *The Social Role of the Gītā: How and Why*, 299.

According to Shubhada Joshi, the reason for the Lord's instruction at the battle field is to reinstate faith on the one who is doing one's own duty, as service to the Divinity.⁶⁴ This brings spiritual freedom in one's own life as well as in the life of the entire humanity represented in the person of Arjuna.

6. Ecological Welfare

One can take *Lokasangraha* as an ideal to preserve and protect the biodiversity. It brings us an awareness of our responsibility. Gandhi's *ahimsa satyāgraha* enabled Sunderlal Bahuguna to protect forests through the *Chipko movement*. It is a living example for environmental ethicists. Thus, it becomes a *yajña*. In the words of Agarwal, "Lokasangraha ideal if properly understood, can make people aware of their responsibility, and can provide ethical rationale for curbing unnecessary consumption and reducing pollution and waste."⁶⁵

The question is, what if one does not preserve the harmony (*ṛta*) of the cosmos? Kṛṣṇa himself answers this question in the aspect of *karma* for *Lokasangraha*, "if I cease to work, the lokas as well as the people would be destroyed." In other words, "I would be the cause for its confusion and destruction" (III.24). For the Lord, preserving the *loka* is a duty and therefore, for us it is a *divine duty*. Therefore, if we fail to preserve the cosmic *ṛta*, not only we will fail in our divine duty but also become cause for the doom of the cosmos.

Today, the global environmental crisis is threatening humanity and the biodiversity on the earth. The amount of pollution from vehicles, industries, mines and their waste create imbalance on the earth. The untimely monsoons, changing climate, melting of glaciers, depletion in the Ozone layer thereby causing various diseases are real facts. To make things worse, the unseen pollution like radiation and e-waste both within the living earth and in the outer space, and their consequences are unimaginable. Thus, the fragmentation of the earth is not just a matter of the future of humanity but also life of the earth; the degradation of the complexity in the inter-relatedness, above all is a moral and religious problem.

The Gītā affirms that the whole of creation is Divine. The Divine is moving all around the world. It fills the universe. The Divine soul is manifested in the whole of creation in various forms. This is the reason, why several aspects of the nature like the banyan tree, *tulsi*,

⁶⁴ Joshi, 32.

⁶⁵ Agarwal, *Social Role of the Gītā*, p. 339.

cow, monkey, *garuḍa*, lion, air, water, fire, earth etc., are symbolized as sacred. They are the mythological figures⁶⁶ in the scriptures.

Conclusion

The Gītā's vision of world order is holistic. It encompasses all the aspects of reality. It not only aims at the welfare of the visible world but also of the invisible world. Therefore, the word *Lokasangraha* aptly defines itself as the 'welfare of the worlds.'

This theme runs throughout the Gītā and can be the epicentre for a contemporary reading of it. Today the world is in need of an order - an order not just in human knowledge, living condition, behavior, culture, polity and relationship with other human beings but also in ecology and spirituality. A mere *jñānamārga* or *bhaktimārga* does not suffice as the *vedāntic* seers expounded. There is need for a *karmamārga* blended by equal proportion of the former two which Aurobindo rightly pointed out as the integral yoga for a rhythmic co-existence.

Lokasangraha is not just a novel concept in the field of welfare. There are other similar concepts prevalent in India which had greater influence on people. Some of them are, *dharma*, *satyāgraha*, *anāsakti*, *sarvodaya*, *Gnostic Being* etc. Though *Lokasangraha* is not as famous as these above concepts, it is much superior to them. Further, its greatness is in its comprehensive nature, scriptural approval and eminent scholarship. It has the ability to stimulate people in greater degree on matters related to welfare.

Lokasangraha, when understood in its totality, aims at the welfare of the cosmos, human beings and the spiritual realm and their inter-relatedness. In this way it aims at the welfare of every aspect of existence. Its starting point is always the individual self, whence it moves towards cosmic and metaphysical world. Thus, the concept can become an ideal tool for the welfare in liberating the last, least and lost in the contemporary world. It is an ideal concept for one's own welfare and welfare of others. It is an ideal for moral, social and political life. Above all it is an ideal to preserve ecology. It has much to contribute to the philosophy of liberation, for a commerce and trade, and inter and intra faith dialogue. Thus, it can become an ideal goal of human existence in creating a just, loving and humane society.

⁶⁶ Myth has to be understood in a deeper sense. Myths point to a yonder reality.

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