LOKAYANA : A NEW SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

I. The Meaning of Lokayana

Language I

By Lokayana, I mean a view of human society or a system of social philosophy that is derived from two positions, i. e., (i) moral values constitute the foundation of human society, and (ii) they are not reducible without a remainder to non-moral facts. Lest it should be confused with Lokayata, it is necessary at the very outset to distinguish between them. It is true that so far as the welfare and happiness of this Loka is concerned, both Lokayata and Lokayana claim to endeavour for it. But the claim of the one is stoutly refuted by the other. Hence there is an ideological opposition between them.

But despite this opposition there is also an identity between them. That identity is not confined only to the acceptance of the object of their study but also goes a little deeper; for Lokayata is a prima facie view while Lokayana is the final view. This does not mean that Lokayata is meant only for criticism and rejection as the modern exponents of Lokayata have understood. Rather it means that Lokayata is the first formulation of a true social philosophy, the first formulation of the commonsense view of society. All social philosophies, if not all philosophies, begin with a common-sense view of this Loka, but they do not end with it and extrapolate many theories from their understanding of the common sense of society. Even the Lokayata philosophies do this. So Lokayata should not be confused with the philosophy of common-sense. It is, on the contrary, the first philosophy or rather a rough philosophy of common-sense. Lokayana does not discredit common-sense although it rejects the Lokayata view of commonsense. It must be noted by all careful thinkers that commonsense is not the monopoly of Lokayata philosophies. It is, on the contrary, the terra firma of all philosophies. No doubt, Lokayata is projected these days, "as not only the philosophy of the people but also the philosophy of this-worldliness or materialism." But this claim is an over-estimate and takes an undue advantage of the linguistic confusion created by the article 'the', because Lokayata, at best, is only a philosophy

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social order. This loka is certainly more important than the Brahman of Vedanta philosophy or the Rāma of Tulsidasa, because the latter is known here.

Now this Loka can be considered from several points of view. First, kāma or libido may be regarded as the main driving force of the people. Secondly artha or the mode of economic production may be regarded as the main driving force of the people. Thirdly both artha and kāma may be taken to be equally powerful forces that drive the people. Fourthly dharma or the moral law may be considered as the main driving force of the people. Fifthly kāma and artha as subordinated to dharma may be taken to be the main driving forces of the people. Lastly it may be said that moksa or a direct apprehension of the self controls dharma which further controls artha and kama. In this way it is moksa that is the main driving force of the people. The last view is held by the Vedantins. Lokayana tries to develop it further. It is the extension of the Vedantic theory of this loka. It agrees with the lokayata that there is no social world other than this loka. But it differs from lokayata in as much as it proves that this loka is based upon the self whereas lokayata believes that it is baseless and supportless. Further the ancient Vedanta goes beyond dharma, in a sense leaves it behind and attaches more importance to moksa; but lokayana believes that the importance of moksa lies only in strengthening and reinforcing dharma and not in undermining it or going beyond it. So although lokayana goes beyond the theory of trivarga (dharma, artha and kama) and accepts the fourth value of moksa, it does not find moksa as in any sense detrimental to the observance of dharma.

In fact lokayana means the 'ayana' or movement of this loka in thought and reality from its natural state of affairs to its perfectly rational state of affairs to the well-settled state of affairs. In its movement which is multi-spiral rather than rectilinear and is both progressive and regressive, it goes on changing its outward forms and replacing its contents, but it always retains its inner reality that is the basis of all of its forms and contents. It is for the social sciences to study in detail the changing forms and contents through which the inner reality of this

loka manifests itself, but it is the special privilege of philosophy to study its inner reality and the relations that obtain between this reality and all of its multiple forms and coming and going individuals that are foci of all the constituents or components of this Loka.

II. Social Explanation

Despite the exhortation of Karl Marx that, "the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point, however, is to change it."2 The function of social philosophers and social scientists is still regarded to be nothing more or less than to explain the social world or rather society as it is. Marx himself simply interpreted the world or human society according to his own preconceived ideas. His interpretation is no doubt used to change the existing social order here and there on this earth. But it is not a peculiar feature of his explanation only. Every explanation of society aims at changing the existing social order here and there, reforming it a little and removing its contradictions. Looked at from this point of view there is no scope of total revolution. Society cannot be changed to the extent mustard oilseeds are changed into mustard oil or a piece of coal is changed into nylon. So far as the existence of society is concerned it remains unchanged although its forms and contents go on changing for ever. Those who do not see it are called social sceptics. Their scepticism is more dangerous than the philosophical scepticism concerning the objects of the world; for it does not give peace of mind and happiness to them and leads them to the hallucinatory world of lunatics. Marx himself confessed, "Men make their history, but they do not make it just as they please. They do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered, given had transmitted from the past."3 What men do in society falls under the categories of the code and the role. They follow certain rules that are prevalent in their society and are called as its code. Again as free men they invent or discover something in society and act upon it. This behaviour of theirs is called their roles in society. As a matter of fact society is a system of codes and roles and is not just a mere gathering of individuals. So every individual has his own role to play in society. The question is only to discover the role that he can or should play. The Bhagavadgita calls it the svadharma of a man.4 Svadharma or one's own duty must be performed and para-dharma or the duties of the others, though alluring, should be avoided. But the discovery of Svadharma requires a proper understanding of society, its history and functioning besides that of the psychological make-up of the individual and his place in society and history. So before trying to change the world or society there is a need to explain society and before explaining it there is a greater need to understand it aright. If the understanding of society is inadequate the contemplated explanation and change of society will not be only inadequate but also harmful to society. The Marxist understanding of society is shown to be inadequate by the advocates of free and open society⁵ in as much as, the Marxist theories of social explanation and social change are found ill-based, wrongly motivated and misdirected. Lokayana agrees with all those theories that take human society as free and open and accept that it is as much given, encountered and transmitted as reconstructed.

III. Societal Facts

The first question that comes up in the way of the understanding of society is: what is society? But as we have called society loka, so our question is: what is loka? Before answering this question, a little digression may be allowed here, in as much as society is generally called Samāja while we have called it loka.

The common-sense use of the word society is highly ambiguous. It is used in the sense of (i) mankind, (ii) community, (iii) the the original cause of present-day society, (iv) present society, (v) social group, (vi) company, (vii) association of some persons for a certain purpose, and (viii) masses. If a conceptual analysis of this term is made it will be clear that society has mainly two aspects, a natural and traditional aspect and a man-made aspect. We must distinguish between these two aspects. So we shall use the word loka for the former and the word Samāja for the latter. To reduce the one to the other is a sociological adhyāsa or mistake.

Now it will be obvious that loka is more fundamental than society. Societies are formed and abolished. They have certain specific purposes to serve and have certain specific functions to discharge. One society is opposed by another society. All these descriptions of society are not applicable to the loka. As a matter of fact societies are in the loka. They are formed in it and abolished in it. The loka is neither formed nor abolished. It is the mother of all societies and in a measure serves all purposes and functions that are attributed to societies. The loka is the basic societal fact that is given to us. It is amorphous; but it can receive all forms that societies have and give to it. There are several forces acting and reacting upon it. Some of them are drsta or empirically known while the others are adrsta or not empirically known. Further, some of them are the consequences of the Pravrtti or practical will-to-do whereas others are the results of the rational will to withdraw or Nivrtti. So the social philosophers and scientists who take into consideration only the drsta elements and the functions of the pravrtti really fail to take a complete and adequate view of society.

The Sanskrit word loka is further clarified when a qualification is added to it like jiva, manusya, mrtyu and karma. It is jivaloka, i. e., it is inhabited by living creatures. It is called manusya loka, as it is chiefly meant for human beings. Both jivaloka and manusyaloka combinedly imply that there is a continuity of life among all creatures including human beings. There is no gap or vacuum in the world of living creatures. The phenomenon of life is thus inherent in this loka and is not derived from any inanimate materials. It is a special feature of this loka and as such it has certain rule-governed behaviour that is found in the life of all creatures. Life-situations like birth, growth, decay and death are the general characteristics of all creatures. Out of all these characteristics death has a deeper significance in this loka. It has its own constraints and controls and influences the judgements, emotions and actions of all men. In the case of many men it has moulded their life to a degree no other factor of their life has done. But finally this loka is called karmaloka and is defined as a texture of actions (Karma-bandhana or Karma-nibandhana). The loka is Karma-Samavoyi, i. e. Karmas are inherent in it. These karmas are classified as purely secular

(laukika) and secular-cum-religious. Among the former are included ista (works of personal piety), apurtta (works for the benefits of the others) and datta (charity) while in the latter are counted Yajña (sacrifices), tapas (penances) and dana (charity). That these religious Karmas are justified as they promote the good of the people or loka is a fact that is denied by the lokayatas. But their prevalence and observance in the loka are as important as those of the secular Karmas. Not only this. In a sense they are more significant than the secular karmas which ultimately originate from, lead to or result into them. When a secular karma is accomplished it gives pleasure, rest and peace, which further produce a unique experience of the reality that is in the loka. This experience gives rise to the idea of renunciation (vairagya) of passions which are the springs of all actions. This idea of renunciation puts constraints and controls over passions, curbs egoism and promotes altruism. So it goes to constitute the very foundation of all social groups that are found in the loka. It is significant to note that Jainism, Buddhism and Vedanta seek the welfare of this loka through the path of renunciation. Rṣabha taught renunciation for maintaining the order of the loka (lokānusāsana).6 The Lord Buddha asked his devotees to renounce the world for the sake of the welfare and happiness of the majority of the people and for upholding the solidarity of the loka (lokanugraha or lokanukampa).7 Samkara and his followers preached renunciation to preserve loka-samgraha or the solidarity of the loka.8 So like actions and passions, renunciation and control of passions are also the basic and ultimate facts or society. Further, the religious Karmas are based upon the proper understanding of the loka itself inasmuch as the loka is not supportless and baseless. Its support or base is called Brahman or God or the Self. When lokāyatas say that there is no Brahman, God or Self beyond this world, or for that matter, there is no loka other than this loka, their statement, though unscientific, is not as dangerous as their statement that there is no Brahman, God or Self at all. The order and purposiveness of this loka reveals that this loka is caused by the self (San-mūla), is housed in the self (Sadayatana) and is supported by the self (Satpratitstha).9 So the life-principle of this loka is not a purely biological principle.

It has its sociological dimension also. But more than this, it has a transcendental dimension which is called the spiritual principle of this loka. As man is a true representative of this loka. he is the meeting place of all these three principles—biological. sociological and transcendental. The transcendental principle is called the self or the Purusa or Atman and the other two principles are called its Para and Apara Praketi. The biological principle is apara Prakrti (inalienable nature) and the sociological principle is para praketi (altruistic nature). As Praketi these principles are the equilibrium of sattva, rajas and tamas. Sattva is the wisdom of the people, rajas is the activity of the people and tamas is the artha or object of the people. The development of this loka or the people can thus be understood in terms of the metaphysical principle of Prakrti Parinomvada that is advanced by Samkhya Philosophy. The transcendental principle according to the Upanisads and Samkara is the ultimate reach of this loka.10 Every creature is situated in it. That is why these creatures are called Brahma-Sanstha and Brahman or the transcendental principle is regarded, though metaphorically, as the ultimate institution (Sanstha). Whenever a man gets leisure and rest from the performance of his duties, he gains a capacity to return to Brahman and realize that he himself is Brahman,11

The above analysis of the concept of this loka (iha loka) may be confused with a view of society that is known as holism. But, as a matter of fact, it is neither holism nor its opposite, i.e. individualism or social atomism. Holism believes that loka is a collective entity and is prior to its members or individuals whereas individualism or social atomism believes that this loka is nothing but a configuration of individuals. As against these views the lokāyana view is that this loka consists of individuals as well as social groups, norms, customs, rules, roles and status. These are the specific societal facts. Individuals, according to lokayana, are not isolated facts in as much as they are always found interrelated not only in their interpersonal kinships but also in their inter-group relations. The ambiguity of the word 'loka' contains a philosophical truth, for loka means both an individual and a social group. To reduce the social group to a mere configuration of individuals is as dangerous as

to treat the individuals as the cogs of the social mechanism or machinery. Holism and social atomism are like the realist and nominalist theories of universals respectively, whereas lokayana is like the conceptualist theory of universals. Individuals and social groups are co-present. The one cannot be reduced to the other. This view of society further rules out methodological individualism that maintains that all statements about social groups or society can be reduced to the statements about individuals. Societal facts can be explained only by an intuitive understanding that sees not only that which lies before it but also goes to penetrate all that lies behind or beneath it, that sees not only the trees but also the wood.

IV. The Moral Order

As our foregoing analysis has shown, the basic fabric of our social order is given, encountered and transmitted from the past. It is really beginningless and endless. Now the question arises: What is this social order? To this we can reply that the social order is a moral order. The Vedas have called it as rta. It is manifested in the heirarchy of three values, that are called dharma, artha and kāma. Lokāyana believes that this very loka is the foundation and ground of all the values and that there is an order or gradation among them to the effect that Dharma is better and higher than artha and artha is better and higher than kama. Further, according to lokayana, Kama should not be pursued to the extent that its pursuit may become detrimental to artha and dharma and likewise artha should not be pursued to the extent that it becomes detrimental to kāma and dharma. Again it is dharma or the moral value that generates the competence for achieving artha or the economic value on the one hand and kama or the psycho-biological value on the other. Without dharma there can be no social order and dharma cannot be deduced from artha or kāma, because it belongs to a higher order of values and is the presupposition of all values. If any single value is to be cultivated then it can be only dharma and at no cost can it be artha or kama alone. As regards the cultivation of the value of artha or kama the golden rule is that one of them should not be cultivated in a way that is detrimental to the cultivation of the remaining two values.

A debatable point, however, is the dominance of artha over kāma or of kāma over artha. Marx has taken the first view. while Freud, the second one. Both Marx and Freud maintain that there is a single motive force of this loka. They take man as one-dimensional only. Their difference is only over the nature of this motive force. Marx calls it the economic pursuit and Freud calls it the sexual pursuit. But lokayana finds them not only lop-sided but also divorced from the reality, for man like loka is multidimensional and there is a deeper and more significant motive force than Artha and Kama. That force is dharma. Again both Marx and Freud are reductionist in the sense that they reduce dharma to artha and kama respectively. But as our analysis of loka has shown, no explanation of artha and kāma can do so, for all of such explanations presuppose the social groups and the laws binding on them — the societal facts that are intrinsically valuable and must be preserved at all costs. Every explanation of dharma or the moral value in terms of the economic value (artha) or psycho-biological value (kāma) is vitiated by the fallacies of generatio equivoca and hysteron proteron. The Hitopadeasa14 which is a work of secular ethics and politics states, "virtue or value is that by means of which vrtti or the economic mode of life is cultivated and at the same time by means of which the people are praised by the men of good conduct. It is this value that makes man the locus of values. This value should be protected and increased." In this way Vrtti-Kalpand or the production of economic mode of living is not the sole determinant of the values of life. The values mainly depend upon the people's sense of values, their ways of approval and disapproval, praise and blame, commendation and condemnation. This valuation is a sine qua non of the system of values and is not derived out of anything that is not valuable. What is significant to note in this context is the societal fact that both the people's moral judgments and economic pursuits are the foundation of values. Moreover, it can also be said that economic pursuits are also judged morally or subjected to moral tests. So they cannot be the cause or determinant of the values. The axiological trinity of Dharma, Artha and Kôma has its psychological counterpart which is known as lokaisana (love for reputation), vittaisana (interest in money)

and Putraisand (interest in Progeny). The psychological trinity points out that lokaisand is associated with altruism which is regarded as the essence of dharma and that it is independent of Artha and Kama. Now ignoring these foundations of values Marx says, "The mode of production of the material means of existence conditions the whole process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence. but, on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness". 15 No doubt he is right when he says that the social existence of men determines their consciousness. But his analysis of the social existence is vitiated by the genetic fallacy. He tries to show that social existence is conditioned by the production of the material means of existence and forgets to see that the production of the material means of existence is possible only in a society or when there is a prior social existence. Social existence is thus prior to the production of the material means of existence. Therefore, it cannot be logically or practically derived from the material means of existence. A new means of production does not exterminate the old means of production. It simply refines them and/or adds some other means to them. This is the reason why new economic modes of production have simply added a number of new classes in society and/or refined many old classes. They have not transformed all the existing classes of society into quite new and different classes. Nor are they likely to abolish all classes and make society classless.

So at any rate, the relation of artha and dharma is very much intriguing in the philosophy of Marx. It is further confused by Devi Prasad Chattopadhyaya when he identifies artha and kāma and blends tantra with vārtā or the science of sexual indulgence with economics 16, inasmuch as he amalgamates vulgar materialism with the dialectical materialism of Marx. His interpretation of Tantra is more Freudian than Marxian. His thesis that "Tantrism has its sources in the agricultural ritual," 17 is an example of the genetic fallacy in as much as it does not explain the Tantra as it is but as it was in its primitive stage. Moreover, to identify the Freudian interpretation of Tantra with the scientific structure of Lokāyata and associate it with women, is going against Marx who says that the philosophy of pleasure was never anything else but the clever

language of certain privileged social classes. 18 So Chattopadhyaya attributes to Lokāyata a view which he himself wants to refute, he makes it a philosophy of the vulgar people or of sexual pleasures. Most probably it is the destiny of the Lokāyata way of thinking that it culminates into a philosophy of pleasures. The philosophy which can save Lokāyata from this degeneration is Lokāyana alone, for it develops it into a philosophy of altruism by supplementing it with the spirit of renunciation.

V. LOKASANGRAHA

Almost all traditions of Indian Philosophy maintain that human life is a very rare attainment and is the means of all values. These traditions of India were built up for the preservation and solidarity of this loka. Even the spiritualist traditions, as Samkara says, are not against the experience of the common people inasmuch as they are the ramifications and development of the experiences of this loka itself. The values which these traditions place before the people are generally called Dharma, Bhakti, Yoga and Moksa. The foundation of these values is the constitution of the loka itself. The sources of Kama and artha are not isolated from, or contradictory to, the values of dharma and Moksa. Hence the correct understanding of the loka must be based on the community of values that determine the loka. Any partial or abstract view of values can give only a truncated picture of the social world, which by and large, does more harm than good to the solidarity of the loka because it destroys its multi-faced-fountain and base.

Lokāyana thus points out that the lokāyata view of society is destructive of the loka inasmuch as it annihilates the qualitative variety of the behaviour that is the characteristic of this loka. The annihilation of this variety and the destruction of the social world are the greatest evils that have got to be avoided by every school of social philosophy. These evils are produced and aggravated by violence which takes numerous forms in society. They are further removed by non-violence which again takes many forms in the behaviour of the people. This is the reason why non-violence or ahimsā is called the greatest law (Parama-dharma). It holds together all the societal facts that constitute this loka.

Social progress is possible only through the consolidation and strengthening of the forces that promote non-violence in society. Every act that detracts society from the path of non-violence may appear to further the pace of social progress, but in reality it ultimately leads to violence and is harmful to society.

When the pursuits of Kāma and artha are bereft of dharma, they lead logically to violence. This is the reason why some limitations, constraints and controls must be imposed on them by dharma. Such an imposition is called loka-maryada or the ceiling on the pursuits of kāma and artha. Every school of social philosophy makes provisions for this ceiling. Dialectical materialism envisages the state control and the philosophy of free and open society, the progressive rate of taxation over the pursuit of artha and the strict observance of monogamy over the pursuit of kāma. But both these philosophies empower the state to lay down this ceiling and do not use the moral and spiritual forces of society for this purpose. Lokavana finds them insufficient and so it additionally tries to impose a double restriction. First, it makes every individual self-disciplined and trained more in selfabnegation than in self-gratification. Secondly, it tries to build up social sanctions against the excessive gratification of artha and kāma and to impose social controls over their pursuits. These social controls are the voice of the conscience of the various social groups that constitute the loka or the voice of the people themselves. They can be established by propagating the systematic order of the values of dharma, artha and koma and by arranging mass feasts, mass charities, mass education and other similar acts of mass services at a large scale. In ancient times. these acts of mass services are now either forgotten or degenerated. Yaiñas which Gandhiji called them as acts of social service or altruism and rejuvenated and modernized them a little. But they are still looked down upon as the acts of primitive society and superstition. The spirit of modernization of Yajña is to be revived in the way Gandhi had visualized. Instead of going back to the past for the performance of the Vedic Yajñas, we should live at the present, look forward to the future and make provisions for new altruistic acts, such as free medical service, free education and job insurance. These acts can be organized by social groups. individuals and the state.

But in addition to these important works of social service, there are two other works that are important for the welfare of the people. They are the performance of one's own duties and prevention from going astray. The masses should be prevented from resorting to a wrong path and persuaded to do their duties. The former is the nivṛṭṭi and the latter pravṛṭii that should be practised by the people themselves. The state measures including legislation and administration of justice are not sufficient for these practices. They must be supplemented by some measures that individuals and their social groups take at their own initiative or under the force of their traditions. Unless individuals, social groups and the state cooperate with one another there can be no preservation and consolidation of the loka, and there can be no social peace and well-being at all.

If any of these factors becomes so powerful that its will dominates and subdues the other two to the extent that their independent functioning is hampered, a critical situation is created in this loka and the subdued factors start a revolt against the dominant factor. This revolt goes on and crises after crises continue to grow unless a harmony is established among these three factors. The greatness of an individual, a social group or a state does not consist in trampling down the independent functioning of the other two factors, but in reinforcing the inherent bonds of harmony among them.

Social harmony that is the ideal of a man, a social group or a state, is, however, not necessarily a static equilibrium of all factors of society. Although in the history of mankind most of the societies have more or less a fixed or static pattern or form and there have been only a few epochs of social upheavals, disharmonies, or revolutions, social harmony can coexist with a dynamic or changing pattern of society. Change and permanence are relative terms and this loka can absorb both of them in a harmonious manner. To work for this harmony is a natural instinct of every number of this loka and the most important task of all social engineers and workers.

Deptt. of Philosophy University of Allahabad Allahabad

S. L. Pandey

Notes

- 1. Lokāyata, Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1959, p. 3, italics mine.
- 2. Selected works, Karl Marx and Frederic Engels, Vol. I, p. 354, Moscow, 1946.
- 3. Quoted by A. MacIntyre in *The Philosophy of Social Explanation*, ed. Allan Ryan, Oxford, 1973, p. 182.
 - 4. Bhagavadgitā, 2.31, 3.35, 18.45.
- 5. See New Leviathan, R. G. Collingwood, and The Poverty of Historicism, Karl, R. Popper, 1942, London, 1957; Contemporary Sociological Theories, P. A. Sorokin, New York, 1964.
- 6. Lokānuśāsanārtham Mahānubhāvah Paramasuhrd—bhagavan rṣabhopadeśah. Bhāgavata Purāna, 5.5.28.
- 7. Caratha Bhikkhave cārikām bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampayā. Vinayapitaka, Mahavagga, 1.2.5.
 - 8. Samkara on the Bhagavadgita, 9.33 and 3.20.
- 9. Sanmūlāh somya imāh sarvāh prajāh, sadāyatanāh satpratisthāh. Chhāndogya Upaniṣad, 6.8.4.
 - 10. Ibid., 1.9.1, see Samkara's comment on it.
- 11. Svakarmacchidre ca Brahma-samsthatā yām Sāmarthyo-papatteh. Chāndogya Upaniṣad bhāṣya, Śamkara, 2.23.1.
- 12. Na caikārtham dvibādhakam, Quoted by Ānandagiri in Brhādarayjaka Upanisad bhāsya vārtika tikā, 4.4.409.
 - 13. Dharmadarthahasca Kamasca. Mahabharata.
- 14. Kalpayati yena vṛttim yena ca loke prasasyate saddhih. sa guṇastena ca guṇinā rakṣyah samvardhaniyascā. Hitopadesa 2.65.
- 15. The Critique of Political Economy, Karl Marx, Chicago, 1904.
- 16. See Lokāyata, D. P. Chattopadhyaya, Delhi, 1959, Ch. V, VI, VII.
 - 17. Ibid. p. 273.
 - 18. Quoted by Chattopadhyaya, Op. cit., p. 30.

The Letters of the Stronger Stronger Colons