

Journey from Consumer to Contributor

by Swamini Sadvidyanandaji

The entire Universe is functioning in harmony with inter-woven mutual dependency between the inert-inert, inert-living beings and living beings–living beings. Therefore nobody is totally independent in this world. For the example we thought the Moon is depending on the Mother Earth, and Moon is orbiting the Earth due to the gravitational force of the Earth. But after few years of observation now it has become very clear that the Moon keeps the Earth into her orbiting trajectory by its gravitational force. Due to the gravitational force of the moon there is a tide and ebb in the ocean which keeps oxygenating the ocean and also keeps the ocean clean.

In short all are influencing each other and helping each other to be what it is. So such mutual dependent existence is called Symbiosis. Symbiosis means two dissimilar or different/ types of living beings that live together and depend on each other. In the same manner inert objects are also contributing and influencing the all forms of life. All five elements and elementals are making the life forms possible to be born, to sustain itself, to grow and to flourish. Due to this symbiosis and mutual supporting each other there is a harmony, an order in the universe. All being and objects are behaving exactly the way they are meant to be; in other words they are the contributors.

But when it comes to human being it is totally opposite. Instead being the contributor all human beings are naturally tends to be consumer of the world. The human life form is the only one who is endowed with the freedom over action. So he/she can choose the course of the actions and the way of life one wants to lead. This freedom over action is an endowment which opens up the vast field of choices or door way to choose. Thus though infinite choices are given to human being but the same freedom has become the curse for himself/herself, family, society, country, mother Earth, all natural forces and the universe, which are the contributor for his/her sustenance. So the abuse or misuse of the freedom over actions and the consumerism thinking have created HAVOC in the world in such a level that now it has become threat for his own sustenance and also other forms of the lives and the world.

Therefore in Gita Lord KRSNa has elaborately talked in details about the abuse, misuse of the freewill and the proper use of the freewill. In other words Bhagavan has given us the path of journey called from Consumer to Contributor. This path is called Vaishvik Yajna or Universal Harmony, which helps person to become from Consumer to Contributor.

As per the vedic vision of the entire world, the world is divided into three worlds called Adhibautika – the world we are confronting or perceiving, Adhyatmika – the body-mind-sense complex and Adhidaivika – the world of natural forces over which we have no control what so ever/ in any manner.

al forces over which we have no control what so ever/ in any manner. The abuse of misuse of the freewill created ripples of disturbance in all these three worlds. Therefore it is very necessary for one to understand clearly that consumerism at individual level and at corporate level have created imbalance in the world.

So Lord KRSNa says what is the consumerism at the individual level, and how to be contributor in the world or what is the life style of the contributor. Not only that, but Lord also gives the means to reverse the process of from consumer to contributor through the right way of leading one's life. So let us first understand the universal harmony, what consumerism is and then how to become contributor in the eyes of Bhagavan

In this year calendar we are going to see all these points one by one with the help of verses of Gita so that we can bring about the necessary changes and put the efforts in the appropriate manner in our life for personal benefits as well as for the harmony in the universe.

(1) जगत्चक्रं वा वैश्विकयज्ञ

Vaishvika Yajna or Universal Harmony of Cosmoic Wheel - 3.14-16

अन्नाद् भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्याद् अन्नसम्भवः । यज्ञाद् भवति पर्जन्यः यज्ञ कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥३।१४ ॥

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् । तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥३।१५ ॥

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः । अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥३।१६ ॥

In Gita Lord KRSNa shows very clearly and in an amazing manner that how the whole universe is interconnected. He says, "Living beings are born of food; food is born of rain; rain is born of Yajna (punya); and Yajna (punya) is born of action." The Yajna means Punya karma, right action or a ritual only brings the rain which is an essential natural phenomenon to sustain the life forms on this Mother Earth. Not only that but, "May you understand Karma (rituals, prayers, etc.) to be born of the Veda and Veda to be born of the imperishable Isvara. Therefore, the all pervasive Brahman, Isvara (the Veda) abides always in yajna." So the Yajna is the most important form of life style to be a CONTRIBUTOR in the world. One needs to develop the respect for all forms of lives, every object of the world and all Natural Phenomenon called Devata or deities to be in Harmony with this cosmic wheel. But there is always someone who does not want to follow this Cosmic Wheel and fall for the CONSUMERISM, so Lord KRSNa says, "A person who does not follow here in this life, this Cosmic Wheel that is already set in motion, in this manner, and lives in sin given only to pleasure of the senses, lives wastefully, O Partha!"

(2) यज्ञकर्ता प्रदाता

About Yajna, The Contributor 3.9-11

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः । तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥३।०९ ॥

सहयज्ञा प्रजा सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः । अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विक्वामधुक् ॥३।१० ॥

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः । परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्यस्थ ॥३।११ ॥

Lord KRSNa says, "A person is bound by the Karma, action if it is not done with the attitude of yajna (as an offering to the Lord). For this reason O Kaunteya! Being one free from attachment, perform action very well for the sake of that – Isvara." That is, though actions are binding by nature still our attitude of Yajna, offering the actions to the Lord is the way to free oneself from the bondage of the actions. Further, "In the beginning (of the creation) the Creator having created human being along with the yajna, said, "By this (yajna) shall you prosper, multiply. May this yajna be a wish fulfilling cow for you." The Yajna is the only means in the human life to prosper and fulfill the desires or wish. So Lord KRSNa says, "Propitiate the deities with this yajna. May those deities propitiate you. Propitiating each other you shall gain the highest good, moksha." Thus Yajna, the act of contributing brings the prosperity in the life and also helps a person to achieve the ultimate goal of the human life, liberation from the bondage of the actions.

(3) उपभोग प्रदाता च

About The Consumer tendency and the Contributor 3.12, 13

इष्टान्भोगान्निह वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः । तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥३॥१२॥

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बलैः । भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापाः ये पचन्ति आत्मकारणात् ॥३॥१३॥

"The deities, propitiated by yajna, will give you desirable objects of enjoyments. One who enjoys objects given by them without offering to them in return is indeed thief." The self-centered life style is equal to incurring papa, sins because no enjoyments are free from violence. Whereas sharing is the way to come over the bondage and being free from all kinds of the impurities, conflicts, imbalance and discordance. Therefore Lord KRSNa says, "Those who eat, having first offered the food to the Lord, are released from impurities, whereas those sinful people who cook only for themselves eat papa."

(4) कर्तव्यं कर्म प्रदानानि कर्माणि

Three actions of contribution 18.5, 6

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् । यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥१८॥१०५॥

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च । कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥१८॥१०६॥

स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः । स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥१८॥१०७॥

The Lord has very clearly mentioned three means for becoming the contributor in this world, "An action, that is ritual, charity and religious discipline is not to be given up; that is indeed to be done. Ritual, charity and religious discipline are indeed purifying for those who are discriminative." They are also sanctifying, purificatory actions those who perform without any attachment towards the actions and the result of the actions. Therefore, "Even these actions are to be done giving up the attachment and giving up the results. This is my clear, proper vision, Parth!" It is equally important in the human life to find our one's own slot or the position in the life to find out to be done action called duties.

So Lord KRSNa says, "A man who delights in his duty gains success. Listen to how one devoted to his own duty, finds success." Only way to success is to commit oneself to the duties or to be done actions as per the call of the situation.

(5) सात्त्विकः त्यागः सात्त्विकं कर्म सात्त्विकः कर्ता च

One's own Duty 18.45, 46 and Three types of Tyaga, Karma and the Doer 18.7-9, 23-25, 26-28

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततः । स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥१८।४६ ॥

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन । सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागो सात्त्विको मतः ॥१८।०९ ॥

नियतं सङ्गरहितं अरागद्वेषतः कृतम् । अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥१८।२३ ॥

मुसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः । सिद्धयसिद्धयोः निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥१८।२६ ॥

The performance of any action involves three factors called the doer, the action and the attitude behind it. Even while performing one's duties one has to develop this attitude as it clearly mentioned by Lord KRSNa, "Through one's duty, worshiping Him from whom is the creation of the beings, by whom all this is pervaded, a human being gains success." This awareness regarding the Lord as a creator of the Universe and action being worship of the Lord brings success in the life. The commitment to the duties as a worship of the Lord implies lot of giving up of the personal likes-dislikes and desires. Therefore, "It is to be done," thinking thus when only the enjoined karma is done, giving up attachment and the result (of the action) O Arjun! It is considered to be Sattvika renunciation." "That action, which is enjoined and which is done without attachment, without being impelled by likes and dislikes, by the person without a (binding) desire for the result, is called Sattvika." And finally "The one who is free from attachment, who has no egoism, who is endowed with resolve and enthusiasm and is unperturbed in success and failure is called Sattvika karta, doer." Thus the giving up, action and the doer of the actions are called Sattvika, pure and sacred that is they make one the Contributor.

(06) सात्त्विकं ज्ञानम् सात्त्विका बुद्धिः सात्त्विका धृतिः च

Three types of Knowledge, (18.20-22) Buddhi 18.30-32 and Resolve

18.33-35

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते । अविभक्त विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥१८।२० ॥

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये । बन्धं मोक्षं च वा वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥१८।३० ॥

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः । योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥१८।३३ ॥

Now let us see, there are these three Sattvika - pure and sacred qualities, namely proper knowledge or a vision, intellect or thinking faculty and the firm resolve or conviction of the person, which make him/her the Contributor in the world.

One needs to develop them deliberately in the life. These three are required to have a right form of attitude and maturity to be contributor. Now for the proper knowledge Lord KRSNa says, "Know that to be Sattvika Knowledge by which one knows one changeless existence in all things (and beings) and undivided among all the divided." The Lord, being the material cause of the Universe is everything. This proper knowledge brings about the right thinking so Lord says, "The intellect/mind which knows the pursuit of karma and renunciation, what is to be done and what is not to be done, what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, also bondage and freedom that intellect/mind, O Partha!, is Sattvika." Such discriminative intellect has a proper vision of the world. As a contributor along with the knowledge and intellect it takes a lot on the part of the person and his/her personality which comprises of physical body, senses, vital forces and the mind. For which Lord says, "The unflinching resolve, with which one sustains, by practice, the activities of the mind, prana and senses of action and knowledge that resolve is Sattvika, O Partha!"

(07) Three types of Yajna 17.11-13 सात्त्विकः यज्ञः

अफलकाङ्क्षिभिः यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते । यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥१७ ॥११ ॥

As it is mentioned in the 4th month topic there are three means to be a contributor called rituals, charity and austerity. Now we will see each of them which are Sattvika or pure and sacred which makes the person contributor instead consumer. Lord KRSNa says "That yajna, the ritual, which is known through the Sastra, which is performed by those who do not expect the result (other than purification of the mind), by making up the mind, "This ritual is just to be performed," is Sattvika." Thus proper rituals, attitude and the quality of the mind are required to be a contributor. These rituals given by the Scriptures are the part of our daily life with reference to the five factors playing important role to make our life possible and meaningful. 1. Deva-yajna - Propitiating Devata or natural phenomenon such as Sun, moon, air, fire, rivers, etc., 2. PitR-yajna – Worshiping our ancestors, 3. BhUta-yajna - Other forms of the lives, such as tree, animals – ants, dogs, snake, 4. NR-yajna - Other human beings and 5. RSi-yajna - RSi or Sages who have given and preserved the ancient Scriptures as a map of the journey of human life.

(08) Three types of Danam 17.17-19 सात्त्विकं दानम्

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे । देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥१७ ॥२० ॥

While leading our life we earn lot in terms of money, foods, cloths, house, education etc. and all of them received as a result of our own right actions performed in this life or previous births. But it also true that we have a choice over actions but not over the result of the actions therefore whatever we gain or earn is due to the grace of the Lord. Every result actions is a Prasadam from the Lord, who is the Giver of the result of the actions. Therefore it is very important that whatever we earn or received should be shared with others, who are in need. Therefore Lord KRSNa says, "That charity, which is given to one from whom one does not expect a return, in the proper place, at the proper time and worthy recipient, thinking, "It is to be given," is considered Sattvika charity." This pure and sacred charity brings about the cheerful mind and satisfaction in the life. Seeing others happy and satisfied we also feel fulfilled and cheerful. What is important in the life is not how much we enjoy but how much we share and care about others.

(09) Three types of Tapas 17.17-19 सात्त्विकं तपः

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्रिविधं नरैः । अफलकाङ्क्षिभिर्युैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥१७॥१७॥

Tapa or religious disciplines are to live our life with minimum requirements and enjoyments with/in the awareness of the Lord, Isvara. By this type of the disciplines one lives life of Non-violence or with no disharmony in the world. This Tapa is also called Punya karma because it implies lot of giving up and therefore it can produce the desirable results here in this life or can give heavenly divine enjoyments here after. But the same Tapa when observed without desires of any materialistic benefits here or here after purifies the mind. Such purified mind is a cheerful quite mind and it is eligible to understand the reality of oneself and the Lord as Limitless Happiness. Such Tapa is called pure and sacred by Lord KRSNa, "That threefold tapas, the discipline (namely with reference to the physical body, speech and mind) observed with total Sraddha by people who have no expectation of the result (other than purification of the mind) and who are composed, is called Sattvika." In this manner the very presence of such person is blessings for others and it is a kind of contribution in the world.

शारीरं वाङ्मयं मानसं च तपः

Three types of Means of Tapas 17.14-16

(10) देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् । ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥१७॥१४॥

From the stand point of the means to perform the religious discipline there are three types of the Tapas namely with reference to the Physical body, speech and mind. For the first one Lord KRSNa says, "Worshipping deities, Brahmanas (scholars), teachers and wise people, external cleanliness, straight forwardness, self-discipline and not physically hurting are (collectively) called Discipline of the physical body." Deities etc are playing very active and important roles in our life so we show our gratitude and respect towards them by Puja, worship and Namaskaram, salutation. This is a simple rule that whatever we use get dirty and on daily bases we have to clean them, such as house, cloths, body, etc. In the same manner we are using our mind day and night so it is going to collect lot of undesirable things like, emotions, thoughts, ideas and logics which are the impurities or the source of inner and outer imbalance. Then there should be alignments in our thinking, speech and actions, which gets reflected in our day to day behavior, manners and conducts. Even non-violence and minimum enjoyments are also part of our life. All these qualities bring about balance, harmony and order in our life and also in the universe. This is the way we can contribute to the society.

(11) अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् । स्वाध्यायभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥१७॥१५॥

On this Earth only human being have very clear speech and language to express his/her emotions, knowledge and attitudes. It is a tool to communicate. It is said that speech is much sharper than the sword. Therefore Lord KRSNa talks about the discipline of the Speech, "Speech which does not cause agitation, which is true, pleasing and beneficial, and repetition of one's own Veda, are (collectively) called Discipline of speech."

(12) मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः । भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत् तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥१७॥१६॥

The greatest achievement in the human life is to have a cheerful mind. The people of great knowledge and position also fail to have pleasant mind. As per the teaching of Gita every day we are facing or encountering different types of situations. But we think we are facing all kinds of challenges which we generally called problematic or adversities in the life and we have to find out the solution to come over it. When we have solution of the situation then it is no more an adversity but a challenge. Therefore Lord KRShNa talks about the discipline of the Mind; mental discipline, "Mental cheerfulness, cheerfulness in expression, absence of pressure to talk, mastery over the mind, clean intent, this (these together) is called mental Discipline." The main culprits of converting situation into problem or adversity are our own likes and dislikes. In fact they are the glory of the Lord as long as we follow Dharma – right and wrong or we do not try to transgress the Dharma. But when they impel us to transgress the Dharma and make us consumer. Such likes-dislikes become the inimical to us and for others also by creating conflicts in the mind. Due to that we lose the cheerfulness of the mind and always struggle to be comfortable in the life, therefore Lord KRShNa very briefly but evidently tell us the discipline of the mind, which make us the contributor in the world.

...concluded

New General Manager AVG

As of 24th February 2019, Sri G. Vallabesan has joined AVG as its General Manager for overall management of its function. He is a highly skilled senior management professional with proven track record of success in managing day-to-day activities and overall operations of organisation. In-depth experience across Automobile, Finance, and Clothing industries. Strong leader and manager involved in hiring and training the right people to achieve the goals of the organisation.

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