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Śrīmadbhagavatgītā and Śrīmadbhāgavat -- embodiment of purely secular spirit

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Introduction

‘Secularism’ as a concept bears a very confusing and gabby attitude of an individual or mass that very often muddies the transparent, unbiased and logical thinking of humanity. In many occasions the vague and obstinate allegiance to pseudo-secularism invites disaster and misconception both in individual as well as in National and International level. Many bona fide and innocent activities are to succumb at the feet of this pseudo-secularism which, if could be analysed in the light of proper and rational judgement, could come to the benefit of humanity at large. Śrīmadbhagavatgītā and Śrīmadbhāgavat which are the two treasure houses of upliftment of human, national and International quality, have been highly molested at the hands of this pseudo-secularism. These two literatures have been mercilessly branded as religious books carrying the belief, customs and practices of a particular community. But the reality is that these two books are not at all theological treatises. On the contrary they carry messages for the global development of humanity.

Śrīmadbhagavatgītā

This is a highly precious book that never spreads a religious message. It contains innumerable valuable Dos and Don'ts for human society, knowledge of sophisticated scientific thoughts, suggestions and advices for character-building of human being etc. Some examples may be cited here considering which the orthodox and fastidious disciples of pseudo-secularism classify this book as a theological one.

“Na jāyate mryate vā kadācin
Nāyaṃ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyah”
Ajo nityah śāśvato'yaṃ purāṇo
Na hanyate na hanyamāne śarīre ¹.”

It means that *Ātmā* i.e. the Supreme Being neither takes birth nor dies. He always remains same, He never perishes at the event of the body losing its existence.

It will be a gross mistake if we venture to judge this śloka from the theological point of view only. Every word of this śloka bears the truth of highly developed theory of modern science. As per opinion of the famous scientist Albert Einstein, “Energy can not be created or destroyed, it can only be changed from one form to another.” According to Clerk Maxwell: “The total energy of any body or system of bodies is a quantity which can neither be increased nor diminished by any mutual action of these bodies, though it may be transformed into any other forms of which energy is susceptible” (Theory of Heat, p. 93). So there is no fundamental difference between the implications of the above-mentioned śloka and the definitions of the above-mentioned eminent scientists about the Law of Conservation of Energy. What is termed as ‘Energy’ by modern scientists, was termed as ‘*Ātmā*’ by the authors of ancient Sanskrit scriptures.

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¹, Srimadbhagatgita, Sankhyayogah, Sloka No. 20

So the above-mentioned śloka does in no case propagate a theological message of any particular community. Rather it contains a highly developed modern scientific thought. So this Holy book can never be garmented by the tight cloak of communal or narrow sectarian cloak.

Someone may raise the question why then Śrīkrṣṇa himself said in Śrīmadbhagavatgītā, “Sarva dharmān paritaya māmekm smaraṇam vraja”. Is this not his clear instigation to the people at large to be converted to His own religion? The reply is simply, “No”. Here we must try to understand the meaning of ‘Dharma’ in the eye of Śrīkrṣṇa. Here he does not mean Dharma as a formal religion. The religion about which he has spoken here is the social as well as human characteristics, the characteristics of the belief, customs and practices of human being, the characteristics of act, occupation, initiation, inclination, tendency, propensity, desire, taste and so on of human being. Here Dharma means persuasion of Truth. Through this śloka He has invited all to get out of the barriers of social bondage and to resort to Him – the embodiment of absolute Truth and to work being inspired by his sense of self duty. Śrīdhadsvāmī commented in this respect, “VidhiKainkaryam tyaktvā”. There is no intolerance for any religion, no antagonistic attitude against any religion. So in śloka No. 48 of Chapter No. 2 of Śrīmadbhagavatgītā He has quite liberally preached his immortal message for all humanity, ‘Yogastha kuru karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā Dhanañjaya’. What more precious a message can be for the welfare of human being at large? This is not applicable solely for a particular community. For this reason, advice of Śrīkrṣṇa is applicable to everybody irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sect, belief, custom etc.

The concept of communism was first preached by Śrīmadbhagavatgītā. Śloka No. 18 of Chapter 5 says –

Vidyāvinayasampanne vrāhmaṇe gavi hastini |
Śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinah ||

Śrīmadbhāgavat

Now we shall consider a few points of Śrīmadbhāgavat to consider whether at all the stain of so called communalism could blemish its secular character.

So let us start from the very first śloka of this holy book which is called by the devotees as ‘Śrīgrantha’. The three words of this śloka i.e. ‘satyaṃ paraṃ dhīmahi’ which are the key words as well as the innermost essence of this whole book are sufficient enough to dispel all the doubts about the secular character of this book. Here it does not say, “Let us worship any particular god i.e. Śrīkrṣṇa, Brahmā, Siva etc.” Here it says, “Let us worship the Absolute Truth.” There is not a single Religion in the world that is opposed to pursuit of Absolute Truth. So it will not be wise or impartial to consider this book from the narrow sectarian point of view.

This book never spoke about the worship of corporeal or incorporeal deities. On the contrary, it vehemently opposed to personality cult. We hear this in śloka No. 22 of Third Canto, Chapter No. 29 where Lord Krishna says-

“yo māṃ sarveṣu bhūteṣu santamātmānamīśvaram
hitvārcām bhajate mauḍhyādbhasmnyeva juhōti sah.”

Here He explicitly directs his followers not to worship Him but to take care of the whole animate and inanimate objects of this world for the welfare of the human being. Śrīmadbhāgavat wanted to purify the whole human being so

that human being at large can cross the unfathomable chasm of vileness of character, narrowness of mind, imperfection of attitude, dearth of discreetness, personal pleasure or grief and so on. In this respect we may refer to śloka No. 50 of First Canto, Chapter No. 18 that corroborates this explanation –

Prāyaśa sādhasvo lōke parairdvandveṣu yojitāḥ |
na vyathanti na hr̥ṣyanti yata ātmā’guṇāśrayah ||

The concept of communism was also preached by Śrīmadbhāgavat. It invoked the whole people to be “samah sarvopakārah” and to inculcate in themselves the essence of equal attitude for all and devote themselves whole-heartedly for the society at large forgetting their own narrow self-interest.

The doctrine of Ahimsā i. e. Non-violence was first preached by Śrīmadbhāgavat. It never differentiated between caste and creed, high and low, friend or foe. It specified one single code of conduct for all class of people starting from the lowest to the highest. It taught all to whole-heartedly steer clear of violence, profession of stealing, all types of vices of character, to remain firm and steady in the path of Truth and to involve in the noble service and welfare of all beings. Let us quote its śloka No. 21 of Eleventh Canto, Chapter No. 17 –

ahimsā satyamasteyamakāmakrodhalobhatā |
bhūtapriyahitehā ca dharmo’yaṃ sārva-varṇikah ||

Conclusion

During the pre-independence period there was a conscious and continuous effort to demoralise the whole nation and its best weapon was to vilify their sacred scripture by classifying them as communal or product of some inferior class of people having highly ignorant religious outlook. But this is not really so. A more close analysis of those scriptures like Śrīmadbhagavatgītā and Śrīmadbhāgavat will prove more vividly that they are in no case sectarian. Here the word ‘religion’ must not be regarded as a sectarian and biased practice, but as a process or practice that can, if followed properly, develop the individuals, the nation and also the whole world.

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