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1. Episode Title: Episode 67 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 67)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: This episode delves into the profound and multifaceted meaning of "ahamkara" as explained in the Sastras. It explores ahamkara as a cosmic principle in the creation of the universe, detailing its role in the formation of tattvas (realities) from Mula Prakriti. The discussion also covers ahamkara as personal arrogance (mada) stemming from various factors like education, wealth, or power. Crucially, it defines ahamkara as ignorance or false identification with the physical body, emphasizing the distinction between the Jiva (soul) and the deha (body). The episode highlights the dangers of ahamkara, particularly how it leads to a deluded sense of doership, and Krishna's warning about this in Bhagavad Gita Chapter 3, Verse 27.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 67, ahamkara, ego, false identification, mada, arrogance, pride, tattvas, creation, Prakriti, Mula Prakriti, Mahat tattva, Aham tattva, sattvika, rajasika, tamasika, manas, mind, indriyas, senses, Jiva, soul, deha, body, sharira, shariri, dehi, ignorance, doership, Krishna, Arjuna, spiritual guidance, Sastras, scriptures, Bhagavad Gita 3.27.

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord),

Sastras (scriptures) use many words to give us proper direction and to bestow us with knowledge. If we understand them properly and enter a scripture, we can exit from it with ease. We will be able to grasp necessary knowledge from them. Ahamkara (ego/false identification) is one among such words. In 3.27, God warns us about the trap of ahamkara.

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SLOKA WORD -

prakruthe:h kriyama:na:ni gunaih karma:ni sarvasaha |

ahamka:ra vimu:dda:thma: kartha::ham ithi manyathe: ||

SLOKA MEANING -

All actions are performed by the qualities of Prakriti (Nature). The soul deluded by ahamkara (ego) thinks, "I am the doer."

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When one falls into the trap of ahamkara, the person assumes that they are the doer of what they did not do. This becomes a pathway for their downfall.

What is ahamkara? Sastra (scripture) uses ahamkara in various meanings. Prakriti (Nature) we see, is made of five elements. There is a state prior to this formation. The state is also called ahamkara. A seed is the state of a tree prior to its formation. The seed gets soaked, then becomes enlarged. Later, a white colored offshoot forms. Then, come roots. Later, branches emerge. It is then a sapling, and next matures into a big tree. We know of this process of change.

Similarly, there are some dravyas (elements) in the pre-stages of this vast universe. There are some tattvas (realities/principles). The tattvas grow gradually and spread. The process of their formation is explained. Let’s think of a stage similar to that of a seed. Such stages are given many names like avyakta (unmanifest), akshara (imperishable). Akshara is the initial stage. When it grows a little, it is called avyakta. Avyakta grows to a little further stage, i.e., like a seed that enlarges and begins to sprout. We are talking about the very early stages of the currently seen shape of Nature, not the current stage. It is then a tattva named Mahat tattva (great principle) that’s formed. Mahat tattva grows a little bit more. Like a sprout that gradually gives a growing white offshoot, pushing the seed downwards. Such tattva is called aham tattva (ego principle). It is also called ahamkara.

From there, there is a split from which the trunk begins to form with a couple of leaves on either side. Later there is further growth and parts. Similarly, sattvika aham tattva (principle of goodness-ego), rajasa aham tattva (principle of passion-ego), and tamasa aham tattva (principle of ignorance-ego) emerge from aham tattva. The five elements of nature emerge from tamasa aham tattva. From sattvika aham tattva emerges the manas (mind) and indriyas (senses) which make the elements work. There is nothing that rajasika aham tattva gives but it brings the other two together. Like a pendulum whose movement from one side to another produces various sounds, rajasa aham tattva brings sattvika and rajasika ahamkara together. The union causes bodies to be formed by bringing together the five elements with mind and senses as necessary. Each body you see has the five elements, senses, and the mind. Mind is not enabled to function in some bodies. In some, it functions. Human beings have a working mind. Animals do not have functioning manas (mind) but they have very actively working senses. Senses work very well in all the animals. In human beings, both senses and the mind work.

mana eva manushyanam (the mind alone is for human beings)

Manas (mind) is the most critical tool for every human being. Anyway, that is one aspect. We talked about the stage prior to all of this. It is Mula Prakriti (primordial Nature). Aham tattva is the stage prior to it. Before aham tattva split into three, it is the stage of Mahat tattva. The tattva that exists right before aham tattva splits into three is also called aham tattva or ahamkara. That is one of the meanings of ahamkara. Sastra (scripture) used it in the context of naming the tattvas (realities/principles).

There is another meaning to ahamkara. Because of education qualifications, or caste, or race, or skin color, or wealth or power, people tend to be very arrogant in their conduct. That is called ahamkara. It is also called mada (arrogance). Vidya mada (arrogance due to education), abhijana mada (arrogance due to many supporters), padavi mada (arrogance due to power) etc. There are many types of this but these are enough for now. When someone is arrogant, he does not care for anything. It does not matter if the other person is a guru, mother, or wife, or husband, or kids, or friends or supporters etc. He wants what he wants. That’s it. He does not mind doing anything to one who comes in between. This is called garvam (pride). We say that someone has developed a lot of pride. It is called mada (arrogance). This is also called ahamkara. This is a different state of a person’s character. It is the change in his character.

When a soul’s knowledge gradually passes through certain types of dravyas (elements), like water that flows down from a mountain when it comes through red soil, it turns red. It hides the natural color and shows that of the other material. Similarly, a person develops an unexplainable extreme state when his knowledge carries some elements, while passing through certain paths. That is called ahamkara. He doesn't care for anyone. He thinks no one can match his state. He ‘walks’ on ‘raised’ platforms! Ahamkara. It is the extreme state of one of the qualities in a person. This is also called ahamkara.

Besides these two meanings, it is also used to mean something else. It is the lack of an understanding. Behaving in a way not knowing the difference between what is aham (I) and what is mama (mine). That behavior is also called ahamkara. He is making that which is not aham (I) as aham (I).

anaham aham kriyate (that which is not 'I' is made 'I')

That is called ahamkaram. Thinking that which is not aham (I) as aham (I) and behaving accordingly. If a common man behaves like a ruler, we call them a mad person. If a normal person, not even an extraordinary one, thinks of himself as God, he talks that way. He poses that way. He carries out his work also that way. Whatever he is not, he thinks of that as himself and behaves. He is also one type of a mad person. Behaving in a way thinking that he is that which he is not. In fact, this body is not us. We are not the body. It is ours. You should say ‘mama (mine)’.

mama patram (my leaf)

mama pustakam (my book)

mama vastram (my clothes)

It means that it is mine. Whatever we say as mine is not us. It is associated with us. Is this body ours or us? We can all question this and reflect. We say that our body is not doing well, meaning our body is different from you. We say that our body is burning hot, meaning our body has increased temperature but not us. When someone says that, he is turning too hot. That’s different. Someone might say they feel very light today. That’s different. Someone might say that they feel very heavy. Someone might say they are feeling weak today. What are all these applicable to? They are not for ‘I’. They are for the body that belongs to ‘I’. If he uses medicine, he might say that his body feels much better that day. We say that the medicine worked very well. Body is not ‘I’, it is ‘mine’. That is different from you. Jiva (soul) is different from deha (body). Sharira (body) and shariri (one with the body). Deha (body) and dehi (one with the body). God explained this very clearly and elaborately in Chapter 2.

When a person behaves without realizing the difference between the two, his knowledge is called ahamkara. This is not arrogance. This is not something resulting from high education or money, or power, or attitude etc. This is a lack of proper knowledge in a person. It is ignorance. It made him feel that he is the body. He thinks he is fat, thin, tall, short, colored, of a caste etc. None of these are applicable for a soul. All these are applicable for the body. When he ties himself up with what applies to the body, then he behaves according to the qualities of that. This behavioral tendency is wrong. It is that, which stepped out of its proper path. What that means is that his natural knowledge was covered by it. It masked the original knowledge of the soul. Because it is masked, all the activities he does will go in wrong paths. He would be hurting everyone like an animal with strong horns. Such a person…

karta aham iti manyate (thinks 'I am the doer')

ahamkara vimudhdatma (the deluded soul due to ego)

Not realizing that he is not the one working, thinks himself as the doer of everything that’s happening. He thinks that it is because of him that everything is happening. What that means is that such a person gets closer to getting ‘destroyed’. Explaining this in 3.27, God is taking Arjuna forward. Let us also move ahead.

Jai Srimannarayana!