Karma and Freewill

Ted Schmidt

2016-12-08

Source:

Karma and Freewill

Namaste Ted,

Happy Thanksgiving!

Question for you… when karma yoga is taught Ishwara is understood to be the "giver of the results of actions". We understand Ishwara as the intelligent order of the universe that gives the appropriate result based on the need of the total. As such we can gracefully accept what comes even though it may be against our liking. In my view this works best and is easiest to understand when someone interacts with nature. E.g. I planted some corn, the harvest was not so good but Ishwara is driving the bus so I gracefully accept. Fine.

However when interacting with another person things are more complex. I bake a cake for my friend, and they rudely react, for example. Now... did Ishwara bring the result of their rude reaction? Not if you think the individual applied freewill in making the decision. I think the only way out of this puzzle is to view Ishwara as the controller of everything, including the complex physiological processes that govern our "apparent" freewill. Is that the way to think about it or am I missing something? So in the example of the cake, we can still view Ishwara as the giver of the result.

Regards

Thomas

Hi, Thomas.

Your understanding of *Isvara* as *karma phala datta*, or the giver of the results of actions, is correct. Technically speaking, *Isvara* (i.e., Brahman, or limitless conscious existence, conditioned by *Maya*, the inherent aspect of Brahman that makes Brahman appear to be something it is not, namely the objective phenomena that constitute the manifest universe)set the entire chain of cause-and-effect into motion "in the beginning" and, thus, is responsible for all of the results that have ensued henceforth, including the thoughts that arise within the apparent person's mind that are the response to the stimuli with which the person is faced. Thus, both the stimuli and the responses it elicits are *Isvara's* offspring, or the results given by *Isvara*.

All the best, my friend.

Ted