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Moksha Dharma Parva

**Prahalada tells Indra
that human agency
does not exist.**

**Shānti Parva
Chapter 215**

Swami Tadatmananda
Arsha Bodha Center

युधिष्ठिर उवाच
Yudhishtira said,
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

कर्ता स्वित्तस्य पुरुष
Is a person an agent of action
kartā svit tasya puruṣa

उताहो नेति संशयः ।
or not? This is my doubt.
utāho neti saṁśayaḥ

एतदिच्छामि तत्त्वेन
I want to hear truthfully,
etad icchāmi tattvena

त्वत्तः श्रोतुं पितामह ॥
and accurately, O Bhishma.
tvattaḥ śrotuṁ pitāmaha (215.2)

भीष्म उवाच
Bhishma said,
bhīṣma uvāca

अत्राप्युदाहरन्तीमम्

With regard to that, there is an example
atrāpy udāharantīmam

इतिहासं पुरातनम् ।

in an old story about
itihāsaṁ purātanam

प्रह्लादस्य च संवादम्

a conversation between Prahalada
prahrādasya ca saṁvādam

इन्द्रस्य च युधिष्ठिर ॥

and Indra, O Yudhishtira.
indrasya ca yudhiṣṭhira (215.3)

शक्रः प्रह्लादमासीनम्

Indra (said to) Prahalada, seated
śakraḥ prahrādam āsīnam

एकान्ते संयतेन्द्रियम् ।

alone with senses controlled,
ekānte saṁyatendriyam

परावरज्ञं भूतानां

knowing the higher and lower truth of all beings,
parāvarajñaṁ bhūtānāṁ

सर्वज्ञं समदर्शनम् ॥

all-knowing, seeing all the same.
sarvajñaṁ sama-darśanam (215.7,8)

शक्र उवाच

Indra said,
śakra uvāca

बद्धः पाशैश्च्युतः स्थानाद्

You are bound by ropes, fallen from your position,
baddhaḥ pāśaiś cyutaḥ sthānād

द्विषतां वशमागतः ।

controlled by those who hate you,
dviṣatāṁ vaśam āgataḥ

श्रिया विहीनः प्रह्लाद

deprived of wealth - O Prahalada,
śriyā vihīnaḥ prahrāda

शोचितव्ये न शोचसि ॥

yet, you do not grieve.
śocitavye na śocasi (215.11)

प्रज्ञालाभात्तु दैतेय

O Prahalada, is it due to gaining wisdom
prajñā-lābhāt tu daiteya

उताहो धृतिमत्तया |

or due to your fortitude
utāho dhṛtimattayā

प्रह्लाद स्वस्थरूपोऽसि

that you remain calm
prahrāda svastha-rūpo 'si

पश्यन्व्यसनमात्मनः ||

seeing your own miserable situation?
paśyan vyaśanam ātmanaḥ (215.12)

प्रह्लाद उवाच

Prahalada said,
prahrāda uvāca

स्वभावात्सम्प्रवर्तन्ते

All creatures are born according to nature
svabhāvāt sampravartante

निवर्तन्ते तथैव च |

and similarly, they die.
nivartante tathaiva ca

सर्वे भावास्तथाभावाः

So it is with regard to their non-existence.
sarve bhāvās tathābhāvāḥ

पुरुषार्थो न विद्यते ||

No human effort is involved.
puruṣārtho na vidyate (215.15)

पुरुषार्थस्य चाभावे

Due to the non-existence of human effort,
puruṣārthasya cābhāve

नास्ति कश्चित्स्वकारकः |

nothing is done by oneself.
nāsti kaścit svakāraḥ

स्वयं तु कुर्वतस्तस्य

But for one engaged in action,
svayaṁ tu kurvatas tasya

जातु मानो भवेदिह ||

it (human effort) seems to exist.
jātu māno bhaved iha (215.16)

यस्तु कर्तारमात्मानं
One who considers oneself
yas tu kartāram ātmānam

मन्यते साध्वसाधुनोः |
the agent of good and bad deeds,
manyate sādhv-asādhunoḥ

तस्य दोषवती प्रज्ञा
his understanding is defective,
tasya doṣavatī prajñā

स्वमूर्त्यज्ञेति मे मतिः ||
because he does not know himself. This is my opinion.
svamūrty-ajñeti me matiḥ (215.17)

यदि स्यात्पुरुषः कर्ता
O Indra, if a person really is an agent,
yadi syāt puruṣaḥ kartā

शक्रात्मश्रेयसे ध्रुवम् |
acting in his own best interest, then certainly
śakrātma-śreyase dhruvam

अनिष्टस्य हि निर्वृत्तिर्
he could avoid the undesirable
aniṣṭasya hi nirvṛttir

अनिवृत्तिः प्रियस्य च ||
and pursue the desirable.
anivṛttiḥ priyasya ca (215.18,19)

स्वभावादेव तत्सर्वम्
Everything occurs according to nature.
svabhāvād eva tat sarvam

इति मे निश्चिता मतिः |
This is my well-ascertained opinion.
iti me niścītā matiḥ

आत्मप्रतिष्ठिता प्रज्ञा
I have wisdom, knowledge of atma.
ātma-pratiṣṭhitā prajñā

मम नास्ति ततोऽन्यथा ||
Nothing else is important to me.
mama nāsti tato 'nyathā (215.23)

स्वभावभाविनो भवान्
All beings behave according to nature.
svabhāva-bhāvino bhāvān

सर्वानेवेह निश्चये |
This is my firm understanding.
sarvān eveha niścaye

तस्माच्छक्र न शोचामि
Therefore, O Indra, I do not grieve.
tasmāc chakra na śocāmi

सर्वं ह्येवेदमन्तवत् ||
All this is temporary.
sarvaṁ hyevedam antavat (215.27,28)

प्रकृतौ च विकारे च

Towards the expressions of nature,
prakṛtau ca vikāre ca

न मे प्रीतिर्न च द्विषे ।

I have neither love or hate.
na me prītir na ca dviṣe

द्वेष्टारं न च पश्यामि

I do not see anyone that hates me
dveṣṭāraṁ na ca paśyāmi

यो ममाद्य ममायते ॥

or has love for me.
yo mamādya mamāyate (215.31)

शक्र उवाच

Indra said,
śakra uvāca

येनैषा लभ्यते प्रज्ञा

How this wisdom can be obtained,
yenaiṣā labhyate prajñā

येन शान्तिरवाप्यते ।

and how peace can be gained,
yena śāntir avāpyate

प्रब्रूहि तमुपायं मे

tell me the means for that
prabrūhi tam upāyaṁ me

सम्यक्प्रहाद पृच्छते ॥

completely, O Prahalada.
samyak prahrāda pṛcchate (215.33)

प्रहाद उवाच

Prahalada said,
prahrāda uvāca

स्वभावाल्लभते प्रज्ञां

Due to nature, one obtains wisdom.
svabhāvāl labhate prajñām

शान्तिमेति स्वभावतः ।

One gains peace due to nature.
śāntim eti svabhāvataḥ

स्वभावादेव तत्सर्वं

Born of nature is everything
svabhāvād eva tat sarvaṁ

यत्किञ्चिदनुपश्यसि ॥

that you happen to see.
yat kiñcid anupaśyasi (215.35)