

Three aspects of Krishna's Teaching

(lecture)

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Bhagavad Gita, one of the books of the ancient Indian epos "Mahabharata" features the dialogue between the prince Arjuna and Divine Krishna through whose mouth Ishvara (God-Father) expounded His Teaching.

This Teaching can be divided into three components:

1. Ethical.
2. "Intellectual" (ontological).
3. Psychoenergetic (that is related to man's development within raja - and buddhi-yoga).

There are three components of man's spiritual evolution [1,3]. We shall consider each one of them separately.

Ethics of Bhagavad Gita

Ethics is composed of three components:

a) man's attitude towards other people and the whole of the environment within prakriti and purusha (that is within matter and spirit in a collective sense except God in the aspect of the Creator);

b) attitude towards the Creator;

c) attitude towards one's Path to Perfection.

I shall cite Krishna's words on each of these three divisions of ethic teaching.

a) On attitude towards people and the environment

Krishna suggests that everything existing in the Universe is regarded as manifestation of God in the aspect of the Absolute. Love to God implies love to the Creation as His inalienable part:

7:8. I am the taste of water, the light of the Sun and the Moon..., Pranava, the Universal Knowledge, the Cosmic Voice and humanity in people.

7:9. I am the original fragrance of earth and the heat of fire. I am the life of all that lives and I am the penance of all seekers.

7:10. ...I am the consciousness of all who have developed their consciousness. I am the splendor of all which is fine.

7:11. I am the strength of the strong devoid of passion and desire. I am the sexual power, which is not contrary to the dharma of all beings

7:12. Know that sattva, rajas and tamas - all these are manifested by Me. But understand that not I am in them, but they are in Me.

12:15. He who does not make others suffer... - that one is very dear to Me.

16:2-3. ...Compassion towards living beings... - he who is born for the Divine destiny

(possesses this quality).

17:15. Austerity of speech consists in speaking beneficially and in avoiding speech that offends.

17:16. ...Being friendly to all...- is the austerity of mind.

6:9. That one is advanced spiritually and possesses the developed consciousness who treats equally kindly friends and enemies, indifferent ones, relatives and strangers, the envious, the pious and sinners.

b) On attitude towards the Creator:

11:54. ... Only by love can I be perceived in My sacred Essence and be merged with.

13:10. ... Constant and pure love for Me... - this I declare of truth.

9:27. Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as a sacrifice or a present, whatever austerities you perform - do this an offering into Me.

12:14. ...That who is one with Me, having conquered the Atman and having devoted his mind and consciousness to Me - that devotee loving Me is dear to Me.

12:20. ... All those for whom I am the Supreme Goal, - are dear to Me above all.

c) On attitude towards one's Path to Perfection:

God offers us to consider our lives as the possibility to near Perfection through constant efforts on transformation of ourselves. The major component of such a life is the active creative love - service to God manifested in service to people.

Corresponding statements by Krishna are cited below:

Fighting one's gross negative emotions and earthly passions

12:13. One who is never hostile to any being, who is friendly and compassionate,... even - minded both in happiness and distress, all - forgiving,

12:14. Ever satisfied... - that loving Me devotee is very dear to Me.

12:15. He who does not make others suffer..., free from anxiety, rapture, anger and fear - that one is very dear to Me.

12:17. One who... never hates, never laments..., - is very dear to Me.

5:23. He who while living here on Earth, before giving up this present body can check the force of sexual passion and anger - he has attained harmony and is a happy one.

16:21. Threefold are the gates leading to this hell where man goes to destruction: lust, anger and greed. Every one should give up these three.

16:22. One who has escaped these three gates of hell creates his own happiness... and attains the Supreme Goal.

18:27. Agitated, desirous of the fruits of his labour, greedy, envious, subject to exultation - such a worker is called rajastic.

18:28. Arrogant, rude, spiteful, obstinate,... morose - such a worker is called tamasic.

11:54. ...Only by love can I be perceived in My sacred Essence and be merged with.

Fighting false attachments

12:17. ...One who never falls in love (with people)... - is very dear to Me.

12:18. ...Free from attachments... is very dear to Me.

13:8-11. ...Renunciation of the objects of sense gratification, non-attachment to

children, wife or home... - all these I declare of truth.

16:1-3. ...Generosity, freedom from greed... - he who is born for the Divine destiny unites these qualities in himself.

18:26. Free from attachment to action... - such a worker is called sattvic.

18:49. One whose consciousness is unattached to anything (illusory), whose "self" has died to lust - that one treads the path of renunciation towards the supreme perfection of freedom from all fetters of his destiny.

Fighting one's "self" that is egotism and egocentrism

12:13. ...He who ... is free from attachments, even-minded both in happiness and distress, all-forgiving,

12:14 ...with his "ego" conquered... - that one is very dear to Me.

12:16. He who demands nothing from others,... that one... is very dear to Me.

13:7-11. Humility,... simplicity, selflessness... - this I declare of truth.

16:4. ...Arrogance, pride... - these qualities belong to those of demonic nature.

18:26. ...Free from self-admiration... - such a seeker is called sattvic.

Nurturing positive qualities in oneself

12:19. ...Firm in decisions, full of love - ... is very dear to Me.

12:14. Contact with matter ... exposes one to cold and heat, brings pleasure and sufferings: these sensations are transient, they come and go - endure them courageously.

12:15. He who does not suffer from them, who also is even-minded and steady in happiness and distress - that one is able of attaining immortality.

Service to God

14:26. ...He who engages in full devotional service, that one transcending the three gunas is worthy of becoming a Brahman.

5:25. Nirvana in Brahman is achieved by the rishies who devoted themselves to the welfare of all sentient beings.

Ontological aspect of Krishna's Teaching

From ontological point of view Bhagavad Gita is a unique piece of literature inasmuch as it is the only of all fundamental philosophical books of our history that gives full and clear answers to principal questions of philosophy:

a) what is God;

b) what is man and

c) what is the sense of man's life and how he should live on Earth.

What is God

Bhagavad Gita considers God in the aspects as follows: Ishvara, the Absolute, Brahman, Avatar.

In other languages Ishvara is called the Heavenly Father, God-Father, Jehovah, Allah, Tao, Consciousness of the highest space dimension of multi-dimensional space perceived by those who neared Him as the Clear Light. Ishvara is also the Greatest Supreme Teacher, Goal of each of us. His representative in organisms of all beings is the Atman - or the Holy Spirit Living in us, in words of the New Testament.

The second aspect of the word "God" is the Absolute or "All" that is the Creator existing as one with His multi-dimensional Creation. The Absolute's Evolution proceeds by cycles (universal pulsation) called Manvantaras (Chapter 8:16-21). Each Manvantara starts with the "world Creation" and is concluded by the "End of the World". With the beginning of each new cycle the Absolute is subdivided into three components: prakriti (in a collective sense of the word), purusha (that cosmic energy which must be undergone the evolution in the given Manvantara through getting incarnated into material bodies created out of prakriti) and the Supreme Purusha, that is the Creator Himself (Chapter 15:16-18). The sense of such cyclic Recurrence is in creation of new conditions for continuing universal Evolution (Evolution of the God-Absolute).

The third aspect is Brahman or the same as the Holy Spirit. As far as the Christian tradition is concerned, the best description of the Holy Spirit (of all known to me) is in the Orthodox prayer "The Heavenly King" - which I think to be the best of all Orthodox prayers. Here it is as follows translated into English:

"The Heavenly King, the True Spirit!
Omnipresent and all-pervasive!
The treasure of the blessed and the Giver of life!
Come to reside in us!
And purify us of all that is foul!
And save, oh the Blessed One, our souls!"

What is man

Man is not a body. Body is just a temporal material bearer of man himself who is consciousness (buddhi) that is the energy aware of itself. The size of consciousness "clot" can hugely vary in different people: from miniature, "rudimentary" - to cosmic sizes. This depends on two factors: psycho-genetic age (that is the soul's age) and intensity of the efforts made on the spiritual Path.

Krishna speaks thus on correspondence of man's body and man himself:

2:18. Ephemeral is only the body of the incarnated. He is himself eternal, indestructible...

2:19. He who thinks that he can kill and he who thinks that he can be killed - both are equally mistaken. Man can neither kill nor be killed.

2:22. As man puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly he gives up the worn-out bodies and accepts new ones.

Man, as said above, is the last stage of the evolutionary line of incarnated purusha's development (minerals - plants - animals - man - God). His task is in striving to achieve the Divine Perfection, of which spoke both Krishna and Jesus. On this way he covers certain stages, steps. We have already considered one of the schemes of such ascent. But Bhagavad Gita features other two as well.

One of them - description of evolution in terms of gunas. That is there exist three gunas: a) tamas - initial darkness, ignorance, rudeness, stupidity, b)rajas - passion, activity,

intensive search for one's place in life, fight for one's idea and so on, and b) sattva - purity, harmony. But, Krishna said, one must go still higher - higher than sattva, to merging with God, and this calls for new efforts, new fight with oneself. It is essential to keep this in mind inasmuch as sattva may turn out to be a trap, it captivates one with its bliss which man obtains on this stage. It "relaxes" one, offers to abandon further efforts. But so that to become Brahman and then Ishvara, still a lot is required.

But it is also impossible to by-pass the sattva guna. It is not possible to merge with God without mastering qualities inherent in this guna.

Similarly it is impossible to by-pass the rajas guna as it is in it that man masters such qualities as being energetic, firm aspiration, power.

There is another scheme of man's evolutionary advancement in Bhagavad Gita - the scale of varnas. (I want to underline the fact that this and many other scales mutually complement each other well; complex use of them applying to one or to other persons give a fuller picture).

In line with the scale of varnas, man on the first stage is called a Shudra. He is too young in his psychogenesis and able of doing few things. His task now is to learn from people more mature in evolutionary relation, helping them in their work.

The second stage composes Vaishiyas. These are traders, artisans, farmers. Being referred to this varna implies having a quite developed intellect so that to start creative business activity. In fact, so that to start one's own business the one must have intellect, which is already developed. It is through the named activity that representatives of the given varna perfect themselves.

The next varna is composed of Kshatriyas. These are people who have ascended still higher in their intellectual development and are more energetic. These are leaders with the corresponding "scope" of mind and personal power.

The highest varna consists of Brahmans, that is spiritual leaders. Incidentally, "Brahman" is the Sanskrit word which translators sometimes present inadequately - with diverse Sanskrit-like words. So appeared such words as "brahmin", "Brahma", "Brahmo", "Brama". But in Sanskrit this is one word denoting both the Consciousness of Brahman and a person who has attained to Nirvana in Brahman.

However it was historically established in India to pass down a belonging to this or that varna by inheritance. It is understandable that due to this reason far from all Indians considering themselves to be members of this highest varna have high spiritual achievements.

But let us come back to the problem of self-perfection. Following are the words of Krishna on how to choose adequate methods of work - that is those, which are in accordance with real stages of psychogenesis and ontogenesis.

12:8. Fix your mind upon Me, submerge your consciousness into Me - thus you will live in Me always.

12:9. But if you cannot fix your mind upon Me without deviation, - then try to attain to Me through practice of yoga...

12:10. If you are not able of constant practice - then concentrate on serving Me, doing only that work which I need - and then you will come to Perfection.

12:11. If however you are unable to work in this consciousness, then strive to merge with me through giving up all personal benefit of your work and try to control yourself in such a way.

Who of us are capable of fulfilling the first recommendation?.. This means we can try another one that is yoga practice...

However, as far as we know, not all are able of being successful in this... Then, Krishna said, lay your path to God through karma-yoga, that is activity devoted to God and not one's own sake. Activity devoid of egoistic, selfish component is karma-yoga.

It is also essential to indicate what great importance Krishna attached to intellectual self-perfection of people on their spiritual Path.

This appears to be urgent due to the fact that there exist a number of schools denying the importance of intellectual development - up to opposing traditional education for children.

This point of view was expressed by Rajneesh in the early period of his preaching activity. He put it this way for example: your intellects are inherent to your brains, but your brains will rot along with your bodies, so it is of prime importance to be concerned about that which is eternal - that is consciousness. These are his early teachings. Afterwards he abandoned such views and started proclaiming that the highest spiritual achievements can be obtained only by the one who mastered wisdom.

However nowadays we still have schools fighting against mind. One representative of such a school talking with me expressed confidence that insanity is the norm in the development on the religious path.

Krishna exalted Wisdom:

7:16. Four kinds of pious men render devotional service unto Me...Those striving to break away from suffering, those desirous of knowledge, those striving to personal attainments and the wise.

(As appears from these words of Krishna, firstly, any active person who is not of demonic nature that is not nurturing rude vices in himself - is pious one. Secondly, representatives of the first named groups are not wise: the wise are the independent group of a higher level. Those striving to break away from suffering as well as those anxious of knowledge and those striving to personal attainments on the rajas stage - they are not wise as yet).

7:17. The wise one who is even-minded and fully devoted to Me is the best. Truly, I am dear first of all to the wise one, and he is dear to Me.

8:28. Studying the Vedas, performing acts of sacrifice, pursuing ascetic and good deeds - these produce fruits of these virtues. But above this all is the yogi who has mastered the true knowledge - he reaches the Supreme Abode.

So who can be called a wise one? - That one who has a wide scope of knowledge on the principal subject: God, man, man's Path to God. This is the basis, the foundation of Wisdom. But it is not yet Wisdom itself. This is just possession of much knowledge, erudition. Erudition and Wisdom are not the same. Wisdom implies the added capability of operating the knowledge in possession, ability to create intellectually.

How can one develop this all in himself? The easiest way is studying in traditional educational institutions: schools, institutes... Plus mastering as many skills and professions as possible, communion with people, with God and many other things essential is to master the stage of grihastha (householder) in full. It is this service to other people, caring for them - first within the bounds of ordinary family, then - the "family" of one's spiritual disciples - that forms Wisdom in man.

Psychoenergetic aspect of Krishna's Teaching

Psychoenergetic line of yoga expounded by Krishna includes the steps as follows:

1. Care of body.
2. Yoga exercises for cleansing the organism.
3. Perceiving the Atman through:
 - a) work with emotion,
 - b) rejection of false attachments,
 - c) formation of right aspiration
 - d) control of mind's activity
 - e) meditative practice.
4. Attaining to Brahman.
5. "Reinforcement of consciousness" (that is "crystallization" of consciousness).
6. Attaining to Ishvara.

Care of body

Krishna did not leave specific methods but gave general directions:

17:5. Know, that those who undergo severe austerities not recommended in the Scriptures, performing them out of pride and self-admiration...

17:6. Unreasonable, torturing the elements composing their bodies... - their intentions are demonic.

17:14. ...Cleanliness,... temperance, non-damage (to body) - this is the austerity of the body.

6:16. Truly, yoga is not for those who eat too much or do not eat enough, sleep too much or keep awake...

6:17. Yoga mitigates all pains of those who are temperate in eating, recreation, working, as well as alternation of sleeping and wakefulness.

17:8. Food that increases the duration of life, gives strength, health, clear mood, food that is juicy, oily, nourishing and palatable - such food is dear to sattvic ones.

Purification practice

6:11-12. To practice yoga, purifying himself, one should go to a clean place and make a firm seat neither too high nor too low, covered with a soft cloth akin to deerskin and kusha-grass. He then should sit on it and concentrate his mind on one by controlling his thoughts and senses, purifying his heart.

Conquering one's mind

Bhagavad-Gita speaks of this so:

Arjuna said:

6:33. For this yoga attained by inner equipoise... I don't see in myself the firm basis for the mind is restless and unsteady.

6:34. For the mind is truly restless, turbulent, obstinate and hard to restrain, o Krishna. It seems to me to subdue it is as difficult as conquering the wind.

The Blessed Lord said:

6:35. It is undoubtedly very difficult to cure the restless mind. But it is possible to conquer it by constant practice and detachment.

6:36. For the one who has not perceived his Atman yoga is hard to be achieved. But that one who has perceived the Atman, he comes to yoga by right way, that is My view.

Description of the Atman and how to perceive It

8:3. ...Principal, eternal nature (of all beings) is the Atman...

6:7. He who attained the Atman that one obtains the whole world for he finds refuge in the Divine Consciousness, when (his body) either in cold or heat, happiness or grief, honor or dishonor.

6:10. A yogi should always try to concentrate his mind on the Atman...

6:18. When his purified thoughts, devoid of all material desires, are concentrated on the Atman alone, - he is said to be in harmony.

5:17. He who perceived himself as consciousness, who identifies himself with the Atman, whose faith is wholly on the Supreme who takes refuge only in Him - that one approaches Liberation being purified by Wisdom.

15:11. Yogis having the right aspiration come to know not only the soul in themselves, but the Atman as well. But those Lacking knowledge do not find the Atman.

2:58. When, like a tortoise drawing its legs and head within the shell, (yogi)... withdraws his senses from sense objects - then he attains to true knowledge.

13:22. The Watching, Sustaining, All-accepting, the Supreme Lord, and also the Divine Atman - so called in this body is the Highest Spirit.

13:29. One who sees that all actions are performed in prakriti alone while the Atman remains out of action - that one truly sees.

13:31. Eternal and not bound by prakriti the Divine Atman though residing in bodies does not act and is not subject to any influence...

15:32. Like omnipresent Emptiness does not blend with anything due to its subtlety, so the Atman present in bodies, does not blend with anything.

But the indications presented can not by themselves, without going into detail, ensure attainment to the Atman. This is up to specific spiritual schools. Searching for methods is the possibility for developing Wisdom of seekers as well as the possibility for creating varied paths which is good since it allows each of the followers to choose the most adequate one for himself.

Contact with the Atman leads to the state determined by Krishna as Samadhi. On this level of spiritual ascent lies the conventional border-line delimitating raja-yoga and buddhi-yoga. Concerning the way of ascending to the stage of buddhi-yoga Krishna says the following:

10:8. I am the source of all, everything emanates from Me. The wise who come to understand this worship Me with deep delight in their hearts.

10:9. Their thoughts dwelling in Me, their lives are surrendered to Me, enlightening one another and constantly conversing about Me - they are fully satisfied and blissful.

10:10. To them - ever overflowing with love - I give buddhi-yoga whereby they reach Me.

Description of Brahman and achieving Nirvana in Brahman

13:12. I shall reveal to you what must be known, what becoming perceived, leads to immortality: that is the highest Brahman without beginning, which is above being and non-

being.

13:13. Everywhere are His hands and legs, His eyes, heads and mouths, omniscient, He exists in the world embracing everything.

13:14. Possessing all senses yet without organs of senses, not bound by anything yet maintain all, free from the three gunas yet using gunas.

13:15. Within and without all beings, motionless yet mobile, non-perceivable due to His subtlety, ever close yet non-expressively distant - such is He, eternal one.

13:16. Not divided among beings yet existing separately in each one, He is understood as the maintainer of all. He embraces everything with Himself and guides in development.

13:17. He, the Light of all the luminous is said to be beyond the bounds of the dark. He is Wisdom, the Goal of any wisdom, achieved by wisdom and situated in everyone's heart.

14:26. He who is engaged in devotional service to Me with unshakable Love - that, having transcended the three gunas, deserves to become Brahman.

18:50. Learn from Me in brief how the seeker of Perfection attains Brahman, the highest state of Wisdom...

5:24. He who is happy within, who rejoices within, who is illuminated within, that yogi is capable of achieving the essence of Brahman and Nirvana in Brahman.

5:25. Nirvana in Brahman is attained by those rishis who are free from vices and duality, who curbed themselves and devote themselves to the welfare of all beings.

5:26. Those who are free from lust and anger, who are engaged in spiritual pursuits, with curbed thoughts, who have perceived the Atman - those are very close to Nirvana in Brahman.

6:27. The highest happiness will be reached by the yogi..., when he is freed from sin and identified with Brahman.

6:28. He who brought himself into harmony and rejected vices, that yogi experiences endless bliss from the contact with Brahman.

18:51. With completely purified consciousness, having conquered himself through perseverance, detached from anything external, freed from passion and hatred,

18:52. Living in a secluded place and frugal, controlling his speech, body and mind, constantly in meditation and dispassion,

18:53. Without false ego, violence, arrogance, lust, anger, greed, full of faith and selflessness - such a person is worthy of becoming Brahman.

5:20. Whose mind is clear and calm, who attains Brahman and is situated in Brahman, he neither rejoices upon receiving something pleasant nor laments upon obtaining something unpleasant.

5:21. He who is not attached to gratification of his senses by the external and who finds enjoyment in the Atman, he, having attained oneness with Brahman, tastes the eternal bliss.

18:54. Having attained eternity, in merging with Brahman, he never laments nor desires anything. Equally disposed to every living being he reaches the highest Love for Me.

Strengthening of consciousness

As man follows the stages of buddhi-yoga the amount of his consciousness energy grows and so "strengthening of consciousness (or "crystallization") takes place:

2:64. ...He who conquered his senses, who rejected both infatuation and enmity, surrendered to the Atman - that one obtains inner purity.

2:65. With this purity attained, all sufferings come to an end. He who attained it has his consciousness strengthened.

However this achievement can be lost:

2:67. As a boat is swept away by a strong wind, so a mind of a person who yields to a pressure of passions is also carried away.

2:63. From anger full delusion of perception arises. From delusion arises the lapse of memory (of one's past achievements). From lapse of memory arises the loss of consciousness energy. Having lost his consciousness energy, man degrades.

Description of Ishvara

10:8. I am the source of everything. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this perfectly worship Me in great delight.

10:42. ...Supporting the entire universe by a particle of Myself, I exist.

10:40. There are no bounds to My Divine power...

11:47. ...The supreme and eternal image of Mine is revealed only in yoga, in merging with Me.

7:7. There is nothing superior to Me...

15:18. ...I am beyond the transient and I am higher even than the eternal...

9:4. By Me - in My non-manifested form - this entire Universe is pervaded. All beings are rooted in Me...

8:9. He who knows all about the Eternal Omniscient Lord of the World, about He Who is subtler than the subtlest, Who is the Basis of all, unimaginable in appearance, shining like the Sun,

8:14. ...He whose mind is fixed on Me, thinking of nothing else, that... yogi... attains Me easily.

11:54. ...Only by love can I be seen in My sacred Essence and merged with.

11:55. He who is engaged in My pure devotional service, for whom I am the Supreme Goal, who loves Me, who is free from attachments and to whom hostile has no access - that one comes to Me.

12:8. Direct your thoughts to Me, submerge your consciousness into Me - thus you will truly live in Me always.

14:3. ...Into Brahman I plant the seed giving birth to all living beings...

14:27. ...Brahman, immortal and imperishable, is based on Me. I am the Basis of eternal dharma and the Abode of ultimate happiness.

18:46. By worship of the Lord, who is the Source of all beings and Who is all-pervading, man attains perfection.

18:55. By love he comes to understand Me in My essence: Who I am in truth. Having come thus to know Me in My essence he submerges into My Being.

18:65. Always think of Me, love Me, sacrifice yourself for My sake, worship only My - and to Me you will come...

6:15. A yogi who is in merging with the Atman, fully controlling his mind, attains to the Supreme Nirvana where he resides in Me.

9:34. Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, love Me, sacrifice to Me, worship Me! To Me you will ultimately come being absorbed by the Atman, if you make Me your

Highest Goal.

7:19. After many births and deaths he who is fully in Wisdom, comes to Me. "Vasudeva is all" - so says that one who attained to rare qualities of Mahatma.

18:20. That knowledge which sees the One Indestructible Being in all beings, undivided in separate, - know that such knowledge is sattvic.

11:13. ...Arjuna could see the whole universe divided into many worlds, but united into One Body of God of all gods.

6:30. For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me.

6:31. He who, grounded in such union, worships Me within all creatures, that yogi lives in Me in all circumstances.

6:32. He is a perfect yogi who, seeing the manifestation of the Atman in everything, through this comes to know the identity of everything - both pleasant and unpleasant.

The merging with the Brahman, Creator and Absolute is achieved through meditation techniques of transferring one's consciousness into the state of "no-I" through the mechanism of "total reciprocity"[3].

Full merging with the Absolute implies mastering of all space dimensions without fail. The vector of attention in the Absolute, by the way, is directed from the Creator towards the Creation. It means that he who dared to start this stage of perfection should keep in mind the necessity to master the stable state in the highest space dimension in merging with the Creator.

7:4. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind and consciousness, as well as personality - all this is that which exists in the world of My prakriti, eight in all.

7:5. Such is my lower nature.

Come to know another nature of Mine - the highest one, which is the element of life... through which the world is sustained.

7:6. Know it to be the lap of all that exists. I am the Source of the universe and in Me it disappears...

I wish you to realize all that was covered above as soon as possible!

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