**Episode 31 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 31)**

**TOPICS:** The concept of **rahasya** (secret), the importance of preserving and transmitting valuable knowledge, the role of the guru-disciple lineage, and the hidden, codified language of Vedic literature.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Rahasya**, **Vedas**, **Upanishads**, **Guru-shishya parampara**, **Codified knowledge**, **Hinduism**

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya bhagavadbandhus

**Bhagavad Gita** is a pre-eminent, divine message giving **Vedanta shastram** (**Vedic** essence) to the world, in a simple format, understood even by the untutored. It reveals many **rahasyas**, commonly known as ‘secrets’.

What is a rahasya?

What does it mean to reveal a secret?

Normally, we feel a secret is something which cannot be shared with others.

Ironically, secrets spread faster than what actually needs to be known. They reach the entire world faster anything else. The first person says, “I’m sharing this with you alone, be careful!” The second person repeats the same with the third person, and the same continues. Now we have many software apps like WhatsApp, etc., where such secrets are supposedly “kept safe.” It’s surprising to know how many “secrets” get circulated through these mediums.

What does it mean by rahasya?

Near the beginning of the 14th century, there was a great scholar, Pillai Lokacharya, a guru in our lineage. He gave 18 upanyasas (teachings), called ‘rahasyas’. He named them Ashtadasa Rahasyas.

Does rahasya mean that which can’t be known to or shared with others?

It is said that a mantra should be carefully kept secret. Does it mean we shouldn’t tell anyone about it? Must be, as it’s termed as ‘secret’! If it is a secret, then why even bring it up?

**Rahasya** does not mean secret. It means something that is so valuable that it has to be carefully preserved. If not to be shared with anyone, then there is no question of talking about it, at all. **Rahasya** means very valuable and meant to be shared only with those who recognize its value. This is what we term, ‘**rahasya**’.

A country has certain secrets. Military departments have certain secrets. It is said that each profession has secrets. For example, the priest community has their secrets. Only people in that affinity group have knowledge of certain information, not evident to others who are not connected to that group. However, with deep interest and attentiveness, it becomes evident.

This is rahasya.

There are secrets regarding country, military, or governance. It doesn’t mean this knowledge should be shared with no one. Officers and others in relevant departments know them. They use the information to the extent and the form that is essential. Only to such people are those rahasyas revealed. It’s because they recognize the value. If not, what might happen? Without realizing its value, one could sell information to another country, for example. He would not understand the rationale for preserving it.

It should only be given to people wishing to make essential progress without abusing, misusing or neglecting it.

manthram yathen:na go:paye:th

mantra is highly valuable and hence, should be preserved carefully.

It doesn’t imply ‘not sharing’ with anyone. It should definitely be given to those who have the ability and deep interest to know and use it properly. This is termed ‘**rahasya**’. Many such **rahasyas** exist in our scriptures.

**Vedas** have many such **rahasyas**. These **rahasyas**, valuable knowledge, find place within **Upanishads**. God assembled all those parts and delivered them to us as **Bhagavad Gita**. Therefore, **Bhagavad Gita grantha** (scripture) can aptly be named ‘**rahasya grantha**’, ‘**upanishad grantha**’, or ‘**vedanta grantha**’. That’s why when such knowledge is shared, the recipient’s qualification is gauged to know if he or she can carefully protect it. If capable of protecting it, it is further observed if he is able to deliver it to others clearly, in a way easily understood. Only then, that person is trained to share that knowledge with the world for the benefit of future generations. If given to people without checking such qualifications, they might use that knowledge for fame, money or gaining respect in society. It is best to keep it away from such people.

That aside, there is a single letter, **omkaram**, encompassing the essence of all **Vedic** knowledge. **Vedic** literature, **Veda mantras**, and **mantras** explaining the meaning of **Vedas** are all like extremely valuable ornaments. For the one learning properly and attentively, it is akin to a beautiful necklace, as he memorizes them (keeping them in his chest, his heart). Such great people understand and carefully preserve that knowledge in their hearts. As they carefully preserve, they do an extensive search for qualified seekers and give it only to them. Hence, it is called a ‘**rahasya**’. Many such **rahasyas** exist in our scriptures.

They are hidden via technical terms. Thus, the actual meaning is not obvious. They are not accessible to those who casually check the book. As discussed, they are to be understood only by those who have true desire, and are deeply interested. Wouldn’t the same text be visible to someone casually checking the book? The text will seem simple to him as his vision is limited to the superficial meaning. He would not be able to speak about the inner, great wisdom. To comprehend the actual meaning, one needs to do **sushrusha** (carefully listening to guru). When the guru is satisfied, then she or he reveals it to the seeker. This is a process termed ‘**guru shishya parampara**’ (guru-disciple lineage). The lineage secures **rahasyas** using codified terms.

We are familiar with one such common process. If a number needs to be conveyed, it is not mentioned directly. I.e. 487 needs to be conveyed only to interested people who can decode the number. Others may read it as simply as ‘487’.

However, when a **rahasya** is embedded, one begins investigation. What investigation? The number is 487. The first step is to find the technical term which, when interpreted, reveals ‘4’. Four hundred, eighty and seven. **Vedas** are 4 in number. **Purusharthas** (aims of human pursuit) are 4 in number. There are others like this. To hide the number 4, they use technical terms, like **purushartha** or **veda** or **amnaya**. Each has synonyms. I.e., **purushartha** also means **phala**, the resulting outcome. Thus, the term **phala** can also be used to indicate ‘4’.

Otherwise, ‘**veda**’ can be used. **Veda** has synonyms like **amnayam** or **shruthi**. Words like these might be used in place. What does the usage of such words indicate? **Veda**. What does the word, ‘**Veda**’, indicate? It indicates ‘4’. Therefore, use the number 4 here. When the word ‘**Veda**’ is used, ordinary folks like us think they are talking about **Veda** and put it aside. However, a qualified person attentively thinks about why the word ‘**Veda**’ was used. They reflect and try to decode it. Then they understand that the word ‘**Veda**’ is used to indicate ‘4’. Conveying the number 8, words connected to ‘8’ will be used, like **vasuvus**, 8 celestial beings or **ashta-vasuvu** or **ashta-prakrutis** or **prakruti** (nature). When seeing ‘**vedam vasuvu**’, we might think **vasuvu** did something to **Vedas**. However, that’s not the writer’s intent.

It means, ‘4’ followed by 8.

48.

‘Rushi’ comes next, indicating ‘7’.

Thus, vasuvu from Vedas was transformed into a rushi.

Seeing this, we might think, “a vasuvu from Vedic times was transformed into a rushi. He might be sitting somewhere in the forest doing penance.”

However, only keenly interested people, understanding these words’ deeper meanings, grasp the author’s message. He understands that the author is indicating ‘487’.

There is another rahasya here, ‘ankanam vamatho gathihi’.

When learning to write numbers, we learn how to place digits such as ones, tens, hundreds, thousands, etc.

Earlier, we said 4-8-7. We must reverse this. The correct number is 784.

With this password, a treasure (of knowledge) is opened.

That’s how carefully they preserve rahasyam.

There are innumerable secrets like these in our Vedic literature. If we can learn to recognize them from a person who knows such secrets, we can learn many things.

Bhagavad Gita is a scripture full of such rahasyas. Let’s try to learn a few such messages.

We need not grasp everything, let’s start bit-by-bit.

Jai Srimannarayana!