**Episode 32 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 32)**

**TOPICS:** The concept of **rahasya** (hidden message), the importance of an **acharya's** guidance, the different interpretations of **Bhagavad Gita**, and the profound, encoded meaning of Chapter 1, Verse 14.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Rahasya**, **Acharya**, **Commentaries**, **Sri Krishna**, **Arjuna**, **Bhishma**, **Verse 1.14**

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya bhagavad bandhus,

We are trying to comprehend a few aspects of **Bhagavad Gita**. Literarians globally, novice or expert, all have attempted to connect with **Bhagavad Gita**.1 None missed the opportunity to opine on it. Anyone recognizing the beauty which **Gita** holds and the joy it gives, has made it a major part of their lives. **Bhagavad Gita** is such a great scripture. **Sanjaya** revealed a beautiful **rahasya**, hidden message in Chapter 1.

We will discuss it now.

We learned that Elders use codes to preserve knowledge. Interested people make efforts to decode and understand their essence. Those without deep interest only understand the superficial storyline and relish to that level. Those understanding the depth benefit immensely.

For a numeric example, the number 0 would not be used to convey 0. A code word ‘sky’, is used. Similarly, to convey ‘9’, the number 9 would not be used. Instead, a code word ratnam (precious stone) is used. There are 9 types of precious stones. Sampada or nidhi (wealth) can also be used. Wealth is of 9 types. Thus, these code words imply ‘9’ to a sincere seeker. Sometimes, the direct word, such as ratna, is not used. Mani or pravala is used in place. Each is a type of a precious stone, hence, implying ‘9’.

There are actually several such great aspects like this. When sharing a **mantra**, it is not simply given directly. Why? Nowadays, everyone is printing books. Going a step further, in recent times, everything is available via digital archive. Everyone has access. If everyone is able to read the script, understand the essence, and implement it, that’s great. However, do we all have such interest? We may browse through with initial excitement, then we quickly move on. We generally don’t have enough interest to dive deep. It’s not that we’re too busy, we simply don’t have enough interest in the subject. This is why such hidden aspects are not revealed to just anyone. They are revealed only to those seeking with deep interest. Thus, these **rahasyas** (inner meanings) are hidden in codified words.

Similarly, **Bhagavad Gita** is also embedded in a beautiful codified language. There are countless commentaries on **Bhagavad Gita**. Even those barely literate are composing commentaries. However, our ancestors revere it as **vedanta grantham** (scripture revealing the essence of **Vedas**).2 They firmly believed that it demanded complete focus to comprehend all of its aspects. Thus, they followed a strict process, **acharya-upadesam** (guidance through a qualified **acharya**), to properly learn. Through that process, they established **Bhagavad Gita’s** immense value.

While many types of commentaries on **Gita** exist, how many recognize **Sri Krishna Tattva** (eternal reality) in it, and have surrendered to Him? Some preach **Bhagavad Gita** and talk about attaining union with **Bhagavan** (God). Some discuss attaining **kaivalyam** (self-realization). Others, something else. However, is that what this scripture contains? They read the same letters and simply preach out of their own speculation. However, sadly, they do not grasp its intended teaching. Whatever they grasp on the surface, they preach using the name of **Bhagavad Gita**. Such commentaries also attain global popularity rather than notoriety, perhaps due to the speaker’s personality, his/her oratory skills, etc.

Because of its immense depth, the Great Ramanujacharya himself travelled 18 times on foot, 100 miles each way, to learn just one verse. Just one verse. Any common person could read and try to understand it. Probably, we also know that verse!

sarva dharma:n parithyajya

abandon all righteous practices

ma:m e:kam saranam vraja

just surrender to me, alone

aham thva: sarva pa:pe:bhyo:

I will relieve you from all sins

mo:kshayishya:mi ma: suchaha

and I will give you liberation, moksha

No need to worry. I will give you liberation happily.

Wow, how greatly He explained it! One need not do anything, no strenuous dharma (righteous deeds), nothing.

sarva dharma:n parithyajya... "sab ko chodo!"

Someone once said, “give away all dharmas and surrender to God, Sri Krishna!” Wow, the same one saying to abandon all dharma, then declares

dharma samstha:pana:ya sambhava:mi yuge: yuge:

every yuga, I take birth to establish dharma

Here, He says He came to establish dharma. There, He says “sarva dharma:n parityajya,” abandon all dharmas!

Is this crazy talk? Has He come to establish or abandon dharma? He says something there and something else here. However, is there a relation between the two? The same one declares both statements. There must be a connection. What is His mood? What truth is to be grasped?

To understand this, Sri Ramanuja, a child prodigy, who impressed his scholarly guru, travelled 18 times by foot, even after accepting the monk order! This must indicate that the word, parityajya, does not simply mean to abandon.

What is Sri Krishna asking us to abandon?

How must one abandon it?

Where must one abandon it?

When must one abandon it?

Why is He asking to abandon it?

All these are revealed when you approach Elders and seek guidance. If we learn by our own effort, we understand it as: abandon everything! If He is asking us to do everything, yet abandon everything, what is the connection here? It seems to make no sense, like the words of a crazy person. After learning the meaning, Ramanujacharya was so overjoyed that he shared it with everyone, “even if I land in hell, all others who who I share this with will get liberation!” We have heard this in the life history of Ramanujacharya.

There are many such intense, deep verses in **Bhagavad Gita**. One such verse is chapter 1, verse 14.

**SLOKA WORD - thatha swethair hayair yukthe: mahathi syandane: stthithau | ma:dhavah pa:ndavas chaiva divyau sankhau pradadhmathuhu ||**

**SLOKA MEANING - Then, Madhava (Sri Krishna) and the Pandava (Arjuna), seated in a magnificent chariot drawn by white horses, blew their divine conches.**

It appears simple on the surface. We understand the high-level meaning. In Sanskrit, a horse is hayam. A chariot is syandanam.3 White is shwetam. A white horse is shweta hayam.4 We all understand these words, right? Let’s take a deeper look at chapter 1, verse 14. The shloka looks simple, easy on the surface. What does it say?

thathaha

later on

swethair hayair yukthe:

that which has white horses

mahathi syandane: stthithau

a great, very powerful chariot - mahan syandanam

stthithau

there are (in that chariot)

Those two. Who?

ma:dhavah pa:ndavas chaiva

Madhava and Pandava

Madhava is Sri Krishna Himself and Pandava is Arjuna. They are in the chariot.

What did they do?

divyau sankhau pradadhmathuhu

they played the wonderful conches in their hands

Here, Sri Krishna is not referred to as Sri Krishna. Whenever He spoke, the text states ‘Sri Bhagavan uvacha’. Here, the word ‘Bhagavan’ was not used, Madhava is used instead. For Arjuna, neither ‘Arjuna’, nor ‘Partha’ nor ‘Vijaya’ was used. Earlier and later shlokas refer to him this way. Maybe. However, there is an intention in that name. What name?

pa:ndavaschaiva

and also Pandava

Why ‘Pandava’ instead of ‘Arjuna’? Pandava could refer to any of the five brothers, right? Of course. However, there is an intent of referring to Arjuna as Pandava here.

Words appear simple on the surface. Look how simple the verse is. “Later on, in the chariot drawn by white horses – **Sri Krishna**, nope, **Madhava** and **Arjuna**, nope, **Pandava** blew their magnificent conches!” This appears as the surface level meaning. However, is that all? No.

This verse is actually the essence of the entire Bhagavad Gita! If we understand this verse properly, we know the entire Bhagavad Gita. If we grasp this one verse, the entire Bhagavad Gita is made clear to us. When examining this verse in depth, we can capsulize the entire scripture in it. It is a great verse. What all did he say in it?

He said horses, fine. However, why white horses? It seems enough to say that they are in a chariot, but, why mahath ratham (a great chariot)? Why was Sri Krishna referred to as Madhava? Why was Arjuna referred to as Pandava? They played their conches, ok, however, the rest named their conches. They could have as well. Nope, ‘divyau sankhau pradadhmathuhu’.

Divyau has many meanings, but we can focus on a few. Divya means one that has an unprecedented effect. Both of them are holding a conch. What are they? Is ‘conch’ a code word for something? Is its color a code for something?

Our gurus wonderfully recognized the essence of this shloka and revealed its rahasya to us. If we also grasp it, not only will we experience bliss, but we will also attain divyatva (unprecedented glory). Let us try to attain it.

Jai Srimannarayana!