**Episode 35 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 35)**

**TOPICS:** The allegorical meaning of the **Bhagavad Gita**, the significance of Arjuna's divine chariot, and a retelling of the story of the Brahmin's children.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Upanishads**, **Arjuna**, **Sri Krishna**, **Mythology**, **Nandaka**, **Khandava Dahana**

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya bhagavad bandhus, dear devotees…

Bhagavad Gi:tha conveys deep meanings with succinct words. That too, it is bestowed upon us by Sri Krushna, God Himself.

**Sri Krushna** considered the **Upanishads** as a cow and Himself as a **Go:pa:la**, cowherd boy milking the essence from that cow as **Bhagavad Gi:tha**. He qualified those interested individuals to tastet. A calf is needed for a cow to give milk. The milk is not for the calf alone. The calf is a means to extract the necessary milk. Similarly, making **Arjuna** as a calf, posing inquiries through him, **Sri Krushna** gave this **Bhagavad Gi:tha** elixir to all. Scholars have a nice verse for this.

SLOKA WORD -

sarvo:panishado: ga:vaha do:gdha: gopa:lanandana:ha

parthovathsa:ha sudhi:rbho:ktha dugdham gi:thamrutham mahath

SLOKA MEANING -

All Upanishads are like wonderful cows. The one who milks them is the cowherd boy, the son of Nanda, Sri Krishna. Arjuna is the calf. The Bhagavad Gita, a great nectar, is the milk, and spiritually-minded people are the drinkers.

**Sri Krushna** is such an expert. He preached not because He is all knowledgeable and wanted to speak whatever He wanted. Cowherds don’t produce anything different than what the cows give. Similarly, **Sri Krushna** milked these **Upanishad** 'cows' and gave everyone their essence. **do:gdha** is His name, His Title. **gopa:lanandana:ha** means the cow needs a calf, which triggers the cow, to start the milking process. **partho:vathsaha**, **Arjuna** was used as that calf. Who drinks the milk then? **sudhi:hi bho:ktha**, spiritually interested people are qualified to consume this milk. What is that milk? **dugdham gi:tha:mrutham mahath**, the wonderful **Bhagavad Gi:tha**. What is its greatness? It does not diminish if you drink it once. The more you drink, the more its taste enhances. **vardhate: vardhate: vardhate:**, an ocean of knowledge, it does not deplete – the more it quenches the thirst of seekers, the more its essence and greatness grows. This is the **vaibhava**, wealth, of **Bhagavad Gi:tha**.

Chapter 1, verse 14 reveals the essence of the entire Bhagavad Gi:tha. Let’s dive in. The verse says, “in a radiant chariot with wonderful white horses, Ma:dhava and Pa:ndava blew their divine conches.” We are trying to learn the hidden meaning behind this verse, as given by Sanjaya. Haya means Horse, Syandana means Chariot. It doesn’t matter whether we call it Sri Krushna’s or Arjuna’s chariot. This chariot has great importance, hence ‘Mahath syandana’. It was not made by any common carpenter. Once, Arjuna performed Kha:ndava Dahana. Agnide:va, celestial being in God’s administrative force controlling fire, unable to digest large quantities of ghee offered during Rajasuya Ya:gam, sought advice from celestial doctors. They suggested to consume, i.e. burn down, Kha:ndava Vanam, full of medicinal herbs, the magnificent forest cultivated by Indra, the king of heaven. Hearing this, Agni De:va was nervous. Wouldn’t he lose his post by burning down his master’s forest? Not sure of what to do and unnable to bear the indigestion, he sought the help of Arjuna, a savyasa:chi, expert archer able to shoot arrows using both hands. Immediately, Arjuna promised protection. It was his habit to protect, without hesitation, anyone seeking refuge. Arjuna does not even consider his own capability. His confidence comes from his faith in Sri Krushna, always there to rely on, in any situation. With this confidence, Arjuna offered protection and asked Agni to consume Kha:ndava Vana with fire, at will. Immediately, Agni began burning Kha:ndava Vana. Indra found out and ordered huge storm clouds to extinguish that fire. Agni again rushed to Arjuna in panic and sought protection. Arjuna again pacified Agni and released many arrows forming a protective layer over the entire Kha:ndava Vanam, preventing even a single water droplet from reaching the fire below. No amount of water or stones could penetrate that covering. Indra tried vehemently to extinguish Agni’s fire but failed despite the assistance of many other de:vatha:s, celestial beings in God’s administrative force. Sri Krushna was the support there for Arjuna to create that covering and fight with de:vatha:s. Thus, Agnideva could happily consume Kha:ndava Vanam. Out of gratitude, Agnide:va offered a few gifts to Krushna and Arjuna. One was the divine chariot, Sugho:sha, which Arjuna used in war. One of the gifts was the divine chariot that Arjuna is using in the war. It is named Sugho:sha, which makes a wonderful sound while it moves. It is also named Nandaka, which gives bliss. Such is the greatness of this chariot. Once, children of a brahmin were disappearing as soon as they were born. All attempts to trace the reason were in vain. That brahmin came to Arjuna, surrendered, and explained the plight of his children’s demise. Arjuna pledged, “Henceforth, I will take the responsibility of protecting your children.” The children were disappearing immediately after birth. Nobody knew who was responsible. The brahmin asked Arjuna, “What will you do if you are unable to find out the reason and protect them?” Arjuna said “If I’m unable to fulfil my promise, I myself will jump into a fire offering.” 9 months later, brahmin’s wife was about to deliver.. Arjuna was ready with his bow and arrows. He constructed a fence around the area. Then he heard a voice, “A child was born, and the child disappeared.” Arjuna was dreadfully ashamed. He thought, “In spite of my alertness and effort, how did this happen?” Everybody remained silent as nobody could dare tell him anything. “It is so shameful not to keep my promise, it’s better not to live at all.” As he was about to enter the fire, Sri Krushna came to the rescue. “Oh Arjuna, brother-in-law, what about my sister’s fate if you do this?” Arjuna replied, “What should I do? I made a pledge and could not keep my promise. I must perish!” Sri Krushna said, “Why did you take such a pledge? You should vow for what you are capable of, rather than such things.” “Anyway, somehow I have to protect my sister’s husband, so, I will take you on this chariot to retrieve those children.” Sri Krushna took Arjuna with Him, that too, during the night. They needed to return with the children that same night, before dawn… …all the while, crossing earth, other planets, the sun, the milky way, other galaxies and ultimately reaching the end of the universe itself. At that point, as Arjuna had no authorization to go further, Sri Krushna proceeded even further. They brought those children back, including the ones who had disappeared previously. All this was done swiftly before dawn. We all know the tremendous journey to the moon. We know it takes 7 days to reach the moon and 7 days to return. For other planets, it takes months. For planets like Saturn, it might take us several years, even with modern rockets traveling 25,000 miles per hour! We can imagine how long it would take to reach the end of the universe! Sri Krushna took Arjuna along and did this overnight. Imagine the immense speed they travelled in that chariot, without any burns or air-pressure problems? This episode reveals the greatness of that chariot. Today, we are able to send rockets quite far off. However, they do not return. The chariot Sri Krushna drove during Dwa:para Yu:ga travelled to the end of universe and returned with immense speed, without a scratch, without any inconvenience to its passengers! There was no trouble to Arjuna or even the small children who were brought back in that chariot and handed over to the brahmin mother and father. What a great chariot! What a great charioteer this Sri Krushna is! That very moment, Arjuna decided to have Sri Krushna as his charioteer in case of any future war. That’s why, when choosing between Sri Krushna and His army, Arjuna chose Sri Krushna. “Having You with me is enough.” “Just be my charioteer, that's enough! You need not participate in war, You need not take up any weapons. Just be with me, that’s enough.” Arjuna said this remembering Sri Krushna’s charioteering expertise while saving the brahmin’s children. The chariot travelled extremely far, at incomprehensible speed, without any inconvenience to its passengers. It came to be known as Nandaka - The Great Chariot, Mahath-Syandana. Let’s keep discussing.

Jai Sri:manna:ra:yana!