**Episode 38 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 38)**

**TOPICS:** The cosmic sound of **Om**, its significance in the **Vedas**, and the correct way to chant it based on desired results.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Omkara**, **Pranava**, **Vedas**, **Matra**, **Nadam**

**Jai Srimannarayana!**

It seems, astronomers discovered a fascinating **nadam** (divine sound) connecting all the planets and galaxies in this infinite, universal space. A modern Nobel laureate mentioned a theory in science termed ‘strings theory’. In summary, it implies that all planets in the entire universe are held together by unknown strings, keeping them in designated positions. We can put such theories aside for now. However, a NASA video supposedly reveals that the divine sound is ‘**Om**’ and spread across all celestial bodies. They installed highly powerful microphones in space to magnify the sound.

Many of us might have seen that video. The video essence is that the divine sound, ‘**Om**’, is holding the entire universe in it and with it. In fact **Vedas**, convey the same. This same message is the essence of **Vedas**. We discussed how **Vedas** are like jewels adorning great people. **Vedic** scholars memorize **Veda** and always associate themselves with it through recitation. Hence **Vedas** are regarded as their necklace [adorning the vocal chords]. They begin and end recitation with ‘**Om**’. Hence, **Om** is considered as a box storing and protecting valuable ornaments, **Vedas**. This is what our sages revealed.

SLOKA WORD -

O:mka:ra prabhava: ve:da:h: O:mka:ra prabhava: swara:ha: |

O:mka:ra prabhavam sarvam jagath stha:vara jangamam ||

SLOKA MEANING -

all moving and non-moving objects, all substances, all sounds they produce, and anything else other than these, emerge from the divine sound of ‘Om’

We can imagine the greatness of this sound, **Om**. Everything, including **Vedas**, musical tones, and the multitude of all moving and non-moving substances, emerge from the root, **Om**. It encompasses everything.

Earlier, we discussed the same as **Narayana**, where **Narayana Tattva** (supreme eternal entity) encompasses all beings from within and around. **Vedic** literature states the same. It is said that the divine sound, **Om**, or the ‘**Om** strings’ connect everything from everywhere by being within and around it all. That implies that the same exists within us too. It also exists surrounding us. Hence, they intended to describe in this ‘strings theory’ the existence of the divine sound, **Om**. However, they do not say it directly because they don’t believe in **Vedas** or **Om**. They cannot accept it because of ego, pride and scholarly degrees. Let’s put that aside for now. However, everything they said is already contained within ‘**Omkaram**’. The same is already defined as God. Hence, **Om** is God Himself. Taking this a step further, in **Bhagavad Gita** ‘**Vibuthi Visthhara Yoga**’ (God explains His glory), God explains His glory, defining Himself to be **Om**. We need to know that **Om** is the root cause for all of existence.

**Om** is also termed **pranava**, meaning one that controls something completely. It means that **Om** has the ability to contain the all-powerful supreme God, named **Narayana**, in it. Therefore it is termed, **pranavam**.

pranava:dhya: sthatha: ve:da:ha:

Vedas begin chanting Om, with the name of God’

pranave: paryavasthi tha:ha:

everything returns into pranava

va:ngmayam pranavam sarvam,

the entire Vedic literature exists to elaborate pranava

Alternatively…

va:ngmayam pranavassarvam,

all Vedic works are the expanded form of pranava

**Vangmaya** is that which appears in the form of various sounds. Commonly, ‘**vangmaya**’ can be translated as ‘literature’. However, it actually refers to various sound formations. All various sounds, voices, words, languages, and everything else we know in existence are **pranava**, they all originate from ‘**Omkara**’.

tasma:th pranava mabyase:th

hence, our sages recommend practicing Omkara

What does this convey to us? It conveys how powerful and effective **Om** is. **Om** is the form of God. To explain this fact, a great chariot is brought into place. What kind of chariot is this? It is **syandana** (that which spreads its essence to the world). We discussed the root, **syandu prasravane**. A stream or a channel spreads water to the entire land for cultivation and survival. Similarly, **Om** is the mountain that spreads streams of knowledge to the whole universe, thereby elevating us. This is **syandana**. However, **Sanjaya** added an adjective to this - “**mahath syandane:sthithou**.” **Mahath syandanam**. **Mahath** means great. So, what is the greatness of **Om**? It not only elevates people who worship in this world in this time period. It is so powerful that it liberates all people in any time period, in higher worlds, etc. Hence, it is termed **mahath syandanam**. That is the power of **pranava**, **Om**. It’s not ordinary.

What’s the use? Some people who meditate upon it do not understand its purpose and what is to be done. They distort the intonation, adding new tones. **Om** has its defined tune. However, they ruin it in every way possible, pronouncing different intonations. **Sastra** (Vedic scripture) specifies rules on how to pronounce ‘**Om**’. Sound lengths are measured by **matra** (unit of time), i.e. one **matra**, two **matras**, or three **matras**. Grammarians specified rules to measure **matra**. A **matra** is relative to the person using it. If someone is slow, they take longer to say even the first **matra**.

Let’s examine the indigenous rooster, not ones from hatcheries we see today. Indigenous roosters have red crowns and a red beard, and make a clucking sound, “kokkorokoo.” Hybrid roosters from recent days do not make such sounds, they make different sounds. Grammarians have taken the sound of these native roosters to explain a **matra**. **Eka matra** defines the length of the first sound the rooster makes, “ko.” It continues to say “kokkoro:.” This is **dvi matra dhvani**, defining the length of the second **matra**. It ends saying, “kooo”, “kokkorokoo.” This is **tri matra dhvani**, the length of the third **matra**.

We discussed previously that the sounds of nature, animals, and birds never change. We may ask, why do the roosters from hatcheries make different sounds than the others? By nature, they do not change. However, human intervention affects their natural properties. The roosters from hatcheries are genetically modified by humans and thus, are not natural roosters. Hence, such transformed breeds are not of interest in regards to this topic. Anything natural does not change. The sounds they make do not change. Similarly, the natural breed of roosters has the original sound that does not change.

People from English countries later refered to this this as “cock-a-doodle-doo.”In reality roosters do not make such a sound. Thus, it is said that roosters from English countries do not cluck, but ours do. The sound from natural roosters measure **eka matra**, **dvi matra**, and **tri matra**. **Pranava**, the sound of ‘**Om**”, also should be used within these **matras**. **Veda** clearly states that results vary based on how it’s used, not based on one’s preference. Some people worship or chant **Om** saying, “ooooooo...mm.” Why should one elongate the ‘O’ to that level and then make mmm sound very short? That is not how it is meant to be said.

Either meditate with **eka matra**, **dvi matra**, or **tri matra**. In case you want to practice it, you can practice on the **nada** and not on the **matra**. **Nada** is the ending part, mmmmm.. If we meditate on **Om** with **eka matra** (1 ‘o’ count), we will be blessed with worldly benefits. If we meditate on it with **dvi matra** (2 ‘o’ counts) as ooo...m, we will be blessed with **atma sakshatkara** (self-realisation). If we meditate on it with **tri matra** (3 ‘o’ counts), we will attain the purpose of life. One will not only lead the current life with all he needs, but also will have secured the essentials for afterlife. Meditating on ‘**Om**’ with **tri matra** gives the most benefits, oooooo..m. After this, if you want to practice it, you can stretch the ending, mmmmmmmmm... as much as you prefer. However, one should not stretch between ‘o’ and ‘m’. We are not sure why recently everyone is practicing in the wrong way. Maybe because of this, we are affected with scary results such as the Covid-19 pandemic. That is not the correct way to chant. **Eka matra**, **dvi matra**, and **tri matra** should be used based on what you desire. **Tri matra** is the most beneficial as it has the potential to yield both worldly and divinely benefits. This is **Om**. If one can practice and reach the stage of chanting it in the right way, then **Vedas** emerging from it will reveal its meaning.

What does **Om** say? This **nada** is not only worshipped and meditated on by people from this world, but also by **devatas** (celestial beings) in heaven, by liberated souls and by souls who have always been free and in bliss with God. It is for everyone. In order to remind us of the importance of **Om**, **Sanjaya** brilliantly added an adjective, “**mahath**” to describe this chariot. It is therefore **mahath syandanam**. We will learn more about this.

**Jai Srimannarayana!**