**Episode 39 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 39)**

**TOPICS:** The vastness of **Vedic** literature, the deeper meaning of **Omkara** (**Om**), and the symbolic representation of **Madhava** and **Pandava** within it.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Vedas**, **Omkara**, **Madhava**, **Pandava**, **Puranas**, **Shastras**

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya bhagavad bandhus,

Sages and **acharyas** (spiritual teachers) have been highly merciful to give us the greatest scriptures for our upliftment. The volume of **Vedic** literature is immeasurable. We lack the ability to appreciate even the names of all the scriptures they provided to us. A great seer once said, “With chalk, one can write the names of scriptures along the circumference of Earth, and still wouldn’t be able to finish.” Only the names of those texts! Such is the volume of literature given by sages and **acharyas**. This could be because each brain has a special intellectual level like each tongue has a special taste. Keeping in mind the interests of each individual, scriptures were provided to attract the individual’s attention, ultimately leading him or her to core truths for their benefit.

The humongous efforts by our great sages and **acharyas** gave us fantastic literature. The source of all this literature is **Veda**. **Veda** exists as four forms - **Rug**, **Yajur**, **Sama**, **Attharva**. Scriptures reveal that the 4 **Vedas** are divided into 1131 branches. If one focuses only on it, it takes a minimum of 24 years to study one branch. Despite that effort, it is still difficult. One can imagine the extensive knowledge embedded in the 1131 branches. All that vast knowledge base is distributed into 4 main parts: **Rug**, **Yajur**, **Sama** and **Attharva**. **Rugveda** has 29 branches. **Yajurveda** has 101 branches, **Samaveda** has 1000 branches and **Attharvaveda** has 9 branches. This extensive knowledge base, **Veda**, is the source for all literature we have been given. **Veda** emerged from ‘**omkara**’. **Sri Krushna** graced us with **Bhagavad Gita** to elaborate the meaning of the divine sound, **om**. This was explained by **Sanjaya** in chapter 1, verse 14. He referred to **om** as ‘**syandana**’ (a chariot) - a ‘**mahath syandana**’ (a great chariot). **Om** is so powerful that it can liberate anyone from all the three worlds. Therefore, it is referred to as ‘**mahath syandana**’. This is termed **pranava** or **omkara**.

What is the **tattva** (philosophical theory), established as this chariot? What is the essence of **omkara**, that which is riding the chariot? Some people say it represents union with **Brahma**. Others say something else. Some others believe that its worship gives a seeker good health. This would be analogous to using crores worth of precious kohinoor diamond as a paperweight, ignorant of its true value. The value of **omkara** is boundless. **Om** has the power to bestow benefits greater than the value of all **Vedas** combined. How? There are two people in **omkara**, the chariot.

ma:dhavaha pa:ndavas chaieva

one is Madhava and the other is Pandava

What are they doing?

divyau sankhau pradadhmatuh

they both are sounding divine conches

They are indicating that they are ready, and questioning if we are. Implying that they are ready to give what is to be given, and questioning others for their readiness to receive.

apa:ram anantham amu:lyam

if ready to receive, boundless precious treasure will be yours

This is what they both conveyed with the sound of the conch shell. One is **Madhava** and the other is **Pandava**. Each held a **sankha** (conch). They have an undetachable bond with each other. They are brothers-in-law, an inseparable bond. What are the constituent entities in **omkara**? You may have heard - it is composed of ‘a, u and m’. The sound of the three together, a, u and m makes **om**. Some so-called intelligent people say that when a, u and m are together, it should sound “a-u-m” and not “**om**.” They are inventing their own versions of the sound. We are not sure on what basis they are chanting in such tunes. However, the way it must be pronounced is clearly defined by the expert grammarians, authors and commentators. These pseudo “intelligent” people consider themselves greater than those specialists and create new tunes. Let them be there. However, when you join ‘a’ and ‘u’, it becomes ‘o:’, not ‘ow’. The next letter is m. There is no vowel next to it. Therefore, it is “mm”. Together, they are pronounced as “**om**.” Elders defined the method of denoting and chanting it as “**om**.” Let us follow them. They discussed, elaborate and established meanings of ‘a (first letter)’, ‘m (last letter)’, and ‘u (middle letter)’.

The first letter, ‘a’ describes the first entity, or **tattva** among all the entities, **Narayana**. This was declared by sages who gave skilled commentaries on grammar.

a: ithi bhagavatho: na:ra:yanasya pradhama: vidha:nam

‘a’ is Narayana, performing many activities, in various forms, referred to by various names

aka:ra:rdho vishnuhu jagadudaya raksha: pralaya kruth:

emanating the entire universe from within himself, He resides within, supports every being, and then absorbs everything back into Him

When He feels it is time for re-creation, He manifests all beings out of Himself. We all know what is taken in does not come out in the same form. For example, if we eat fruit, we can vomit it out, but the fruit won’t resemble itself anymore. It is of different form and shape. However, **Sri Vishnu** emanates objects from within Him, taking them back, and re-emanating them carefully, in the same state that they were taken in. He ensures everyone’s **karma** (records of past actions), remain intact respectively with them, without any distortion. Therefore, He is known as ‘**jagath karana**’. Meaning, He is the only one who creates, protects, and destroys.

It is not three different entities performing three tasks. It is only One who must perform all three tasks. This is what **Veda** says.

yatho: va: im:ani bhu:thani ja:yanthe: ye:na ja:tha:ni ji:vanthi

yath prayanthy abhisamvisanthi:

He brings out from Himself, protects and takes back into Him; when ready, He alone grants souls their permanent abode

He is the one and only. The great Telugu poet, **Pothana**, eloquently explained “**evvaniche: janinchu jagamu evvani lopalanundu linamai**”, the one who is the cause of the entire existence also carries it within Him. It should be only one Supreme Being doing all these. He is named as **Narayana**. He is also named **Vishnu**. He is also named **Vasudeva**. As per eternal **Vedic** science, He is also referred to with many other names. He is the first one. All other objects emerging from Him are secondary. Therefore, the first letter is ‘**a**’ **kara**. It is from ‘**a**’ **kara** that **om** has emerged. It is from **om** that **Vedas** have emerged. It is from **Vedas** that all the other literature and later other world languages took shape. They all trace back and merge into ‘**a**’ **kara**.

‘**A**’ **kara** is **adi** (first). **Narayana** is the origin. The substance is **Narayana** and the sound which explains this substance is ‘**a**’ **kara**. Therefore, as they are both firsts, Elders established that both ‘**a**’ **kara** and **Narayana** have a relation: ‘sound and its meaning’ with each other. They clearly state that ‘**a**’ **kara** explains **Narayana** and **Narayana** is identified by ‘**a**’ **kara**. However, what name is used here? “**Madhava**.” **Madhava** is one of the two [in the chariot]. Why was the name **Madhava** used? This reveals that the **tattva** revealed as ‘**a**’ **karam** is not an entity all by Himself. He has ‘**ma**’ along with Him. ‘**Ma**’ means Mother. Mother is also joined with Him. As per **Veda**…

hri:shchathe: lakshmi:scha pathnyow:

the creator of this entire existence, sahasra sirsha purusha (1000 headed being) is the spouse of Lakshmi

**Lakshmi** is an extraordinary **tattva**, enhancing God’s compassionate nature. At times, characteristics such as His unquestionable supremacy can suppress His soft side of compassion, empathy etc. **Lakshmi Tattva** in Him invokes that softer side thereby making Him go easy on us. **Lakshmi Tattva** is that which tunes Him to be more empathetic, loving and compassionate towards us so that He takes us to the most blissful state. This **tattva** is referred to as ‘**Ma**’. He is the spouse of ‘**Ma**’ and therefore named “**Madhava**.” **Narayana** is **Madhava**! Hence, He is named “**Madhavaha**.”

He is dayanatha (compassionate).

He is karunamaya (kind).

He is krupamurthi (full of grace).

He is Lakshmi pati (spouse of Lakshmi), Sriyah pati (spouse of Sri).

He is thus beautifully explained. He is holding a conch. ‘Om’ is composed of the letters ‘a’, ‘u’ and ‘m’. The letter ‘a’ is the conch that is worn, augmented, by Madhava. Thus, God is recognized by ‘a’ kara. The last letter, ‘m’, represents Pandava (Arjuna), as he is holding the conch denoted by ‘m’ karam (all the souls). They both are sounding conches. The meaning of this is being explained to the world.

We know **Madhava**, who is **Narayana**. Now, He incarnated as **Sri Krushna**. The second is **Pandava**, who is named **Arjuna**. He is sounding one conch. However, there is ‘u’ **kara** in the middle of **om**. This explains the unbreakable relation between both. **Arjuna** belongs only to **Madhava** and **Madhava** is showing His grace only for the sake of **Arjuna**. ‘U’ **kara** conveys this message. Not this nor any other conch, it simply denotes the connection between **Madhava** and **Pandava**. That is why, there are only two people in the chariot, “**Madhavah pandavas chaiva**.”

There is a relationship between them - ‘a’ in ‘**a** **kara**’ and ‘m’ in ‘**ma** **kara**’. What does ‘m’ say?

maka:ra:rdo ji:vaha thadupakaranam vaishnava midam

‘m’ is jiva (a soul), an instrument in Lord’s hands in relation to Sri Vishnu, Vaishnava midam

The relation between God and soul is undetachable. The relation between **Arjuna** and **Madhava** is inseparable. ‘U’ **karam** explains this...

uka:raha ananya:rham niyama ithi sambandham anayo:ho

the eternal relation between both

On joining all three, we get A: U: M: (**Om**) **omkara**. This is the chariot. One need not think that we are making baseless interpretations of **Pandava**, **jiva**, ‘**m**’ **karam** etc. We will gradually understand further in our next sessions.

**Jai Srimannarayana!**