**Episode 40 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 40)**

**TOPICS:** The symbolic connection between **Omkara** and the **conch** (**Sankha**), the meaning of the letters in **Om**, and the eternal relationship between God and the soul.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Omkara**, **Pranava**, **Narayana**, **Jiva**, **Sankha**

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya bhagavad bandhus, ...

**Vedas** emerged from **Omkara**. **Omkara** is termed **pranava**. It is known for **nada** (the sound it produces). Therefore, it is referred to as **Pranava Nada** (the sound of ‘**Om**’). **Omkaram** is symbolically compared to **Sankha** (conch) because similar sounds are produced. In addition, **Sankha** resembles **Om** in shape. If we write the word ‘**Omkaram**’ in either Telugu or Nagari script, it resembles a **sankha** shape. These reasons are probably why **Sankha** is symbolically compared to **Omkaram**.

**Bhagavad Gita**, chapter 1 **sloka** 14, explains there are two people on a chariot. One is **Madhava**, the other is **Pandava**. Each holds a conch. We learned that the chariot represents **Omkara**. **Madhava** and **Pandava** are **Sri Krushna** and **Arjuna**. The 2 conches they hold are 2 primary letters in **Omkaram**, ‘a’ and ‘m’. The letter ‘m’ represents souls and the letter ‘a’ represents God. He and us. The letter ‘a’ represents Him. The letter ‘m’ represents us.

One may feel this is illogical, questionable. That’s not necessary. ‘A’ represents Him, a well-known being, the universal cause. He is **akara ardham** (the meaning of ‘a’). Why? He is the protector of the entire universe. ‘A’ also denotes protection. ‘**Ava rakshe**’ is the root of ‘**a karam**’ in Sanskrit. A word used in describing a person should be qualified to describe that person. **Narayana** is the protector and the cause. He has these qualities. Similarly, ‘a’ is the first letter, the source and reason for all letters, carrying and protecting all of them with and within it. Every letter merges into ‘a’ and every letter emerges from ‘a’. Linguists have declared this. ‘A’ and **Narayana** have similar qualities, and therefore, are related. Hence, ‘a’ represents Him, **Narayana**, God.

Then how does ‘m’ denote us?

Nature can be classified as sthavara (immobile) or jangama (mobile). Numerologists have identified each substance by a few letters. We all know a big chart of elements that began with 105 elements. It increased to 109 and then to approximately 129 elements today. However, Elders, the wise, did not make as many classifications. They classified everything into only 25 categories. Everything we see is formed by five elements - earth, water, fire, wind, and space. They mapped a set of 25 letters, each representing an element. All those 25 letters, from ‘ka’ to ‘ma’, were grouped into 5 rows with 5 letters in each.

* 'Ka' group – **Ka:, Kha:, Ga:, Gha:, Nya**
* 'Cha' group - **Ch:, Cha:, Ja:, Jha:, Ini**
* 'Ta' group - **Ta, Ta:, Da, Da:, Na,**
* 'Tha' group – **Tha, Tha:, Dha, Dha:, Na:**
* 'Pa' group – **Pa, Pha:, Ba, Bha: Ma**

A total of 25 letters, five groups containing five letters each. Based on an alphabet’s embedded power, realising the innate quality of an element, each element is represented by one letter. Space is symbolized by the letter **Ka:**. Earth is symbolized by the letter **Na:**. Air is symbolized by the letter **Ga:**. Fire is symbolized by the letter **Gha:**. As fire gives heat, it is referred to as **Gha:**. As the sky shines, it is referred to as **Ka:**. As earth inculcates ignorance, it is referred to as **Nya:**. These are symbolic representations. The same applies for the rest. So, the five elements of nature are represented by the ‘Ka’ family.

We have 5 **jnana indriyas** (sensory organs). What are they? Eyes to see a form, ears to listen, nose to smell, tongue to taste and skin to touch. These are called **jnanendriyas** (sensory organs). These five are represented by **Ch:, Cha:, Ja:, Jha:, Ini**. We have 5 **karma indriyas** (organs to perform work) - mouth to speak, hands to work, legs to walk, and excretory/urinary organs. These five are represented by **Ta, Ta:, Da, Da:, Na**. There are five qualities associated with the five elements of nature. Earth has a smell. Water has taste. Fire has color. Wind can be felt. Space makes sound audible. These 5 are termed **vishayas** (experienceable natural qualities). They are represented by the five letters of the ‘Tha’ family - **Tha, Tha:, Dha, Dha:, Na:**.

Then, the letter ‘Pa’ is used to indicate **manas** (subtle mind), the inner organ. ‘Pha’ indicates **buddhi** (intellect), which is the base for the **manas**. **Mahath tattva** (a greater element) guides the intellect. The root of **mahath tattva** is **aham tattva** (the ego) and is represented by ‘Ba’. The root element of all this is called **mula prakriti** and is indicated by ‘Bha’. This completes the 24 natural elements. These are the 24 sounds (letters) that define all substances in nature. Whether the most minute particle or massive substance, all elements belong to one of these 24 elements. Even a tiny micron, or even further, the most microscopic, smallest particle, also belongs within one of the 24 elemental categories. Our body is also composed of these 24 elements.

If we assume the body, made of these 24 elements, as a throne, then the person who sits on this throne is **jiva** (a soul), indicated by the 25th letter. That 25th letter is ‘**ma kara**’ (‘m’). **Makara** indicates **jiva**, a soul. Why? Why is **jiva** represented by ‘ma’ and not ‘ka’? As we discussed previously, codes and their corresponding entities should have similar characteristics. Knowledge is an essential characteristic of a soul, and none of the 24 elements have inherent knowledge. These 24 elements are analogous to a machine. **Jiva** (soul), is analogous to a battery powering this machine. Knowledge is an inherent power which the soul possesses. All 24 elements work only if the soul possessing knowledge resides within. None of those elements work independently without the **jiva**. Therefore, a soul is one who has knowledge and who is knowledge.

The corresponding root words in Sanskrit that describes this is

man jna:ne:

manu avabodhane:

Thus, the letter ‘**Ma**’ can be used to represent the soul. From the letter ‘Ka’ to ‘Ma’, the 25th letter, each letter indicates an element. ‘Ma’ indicates soul. Therefore, ‘ma’ means **jiva** (soul), the 25th letter. The sound of ‘**Om**’, has the sound of ‘a’ representing **Narayana** and the sound of ‘ma’ representing **jiva**, a soul.

**Jiva**, represented by a letter in **Omkaram**, is also a **sankhadhari** (one holding a conch). Though we are all souls, we do not have pure knowledge. Our knowledge has been contaminated in many ways. In Sanskrit language, flawless knowledge is termed as **panda**. **Panda** translates to clean, pure knowledge. Those who possess sanctified knowledge are termed **Pandu**. The son of this **Pandu** is referred to as **Pandava**. This means **Pandava** is one who is in a lineage of pure knowledge. It is not easy for people like us with contaminated knowledge to sound the conch in the same tone as **pranava nada**. It is only possible for those with pure knowledge. We should take them as a model. Therefore, the sound of ‘ma’ in ’Om’ refers to the soul with pure, clean knowledge.

* ‘**A**’, ‘**Ma**’
* God, soul
* **Narayana**, **jnani** (soul possessing purified knowledge)

A **jnani** is one with sanctified knowledge like an **alwar**, or **acharyas** in a lineage. Such great **jnanis** represent ‘ma’. The letter ‘u’ [between ‘a’ and ‘m’] represents the imperishable bond between God and Soul. The relation between God and soul is everlasting. This is explained by ‘**u karam**’. God and soul cannot exist without each other. God does not exist without **jiva** and **jiva** does not exist without God. **Pranava** (**Om**) does not form without ‘a’ (God) or ‘m’ (**Jiva**). Thus, they are interdependent on each other and one cannot exist without the other. God never leaves **jiva**, yet, **jiva** is not God. Both ‘a’ and ‘m’ are not the same, they are different. However, they have an everlasting relationship. **Veda** declares that **jiva** will never become God. However, a **jiva** can become like God.

**SLOKA WORD - de:ho deva:laya pro:ktaha, ji:vo de:va sana:thanaha SLOKA MEANING - Many people ignorantly claim that one becomes God after leaving this body, they claim jiva is God Himself.**

That is wrong. One can never become God, yet, one can become as great as God. As we progress in **Bhagavad Gita**, **Sri Krushna** Himself says...

**SLOKA WORD - mama sa:dharmya magatha:ha sadge:pa no:paja:yanthe pralaye:na vyadanthi cha SLOKA MEANING - one can become as great as me**

If one’s impediments and impurities shrouding **jnanam** are cleared, pure knowledge will shine brilliantly and he will become the abode of true bliss similar to God. It does not mean he will become God. Rather, he will attain eternal union with God. As per **Bhagavad Gita**, they are in the same ‘**Pranavam**’ chariot, thus, their eternal bond should be known and understood by **Pranavam**. It explains that the soul, represented by ‘**ma kara**’ (‘m’) should be God’s instrument.

maka:ra:rdo ji:vaha thadupakaranam vaishnavan

he should be an instrument held by God

One should always remember this. At the outset of the war, **Arjuna** thought that he was the one who would fight, these people would die, he would gain virtue, he may commit sins, etc. Later, after listening to the entire **Bhagavad Gita**, he realized properly, and declared himself as **Sri Krushna’s** disciple.

karishye: vachanam thava

without question, I will follow your instruction

yathra pa:rdha dhanurdharaha

implementing Sri Krushna’s orders, Arjuna picked up the bow that he initially threw down

He became an instrument of **Krushna**. He followed **Krushna’s** orders and did exactly what he was instructed. A soul is never independent. He does not possess abilities independently to serve his purpose. One should remember this. You are an instrument in the hands of God, thus, behave like one. An instrument is never independent and is never selfish. An instrument is always subservient to its owner. It works for the purpose of the owner in the way he desires. It works because of its owner. If a **jiva** realizes this, that is enough. God is the leader. I belong to God. I am His instrument. I work for His purpose. I will offer all my activities to Him. This is the gist explained by **Sri Krushna** in **Bhagavad Gita**. If we understand this, we grasp the entire **Bhagavad Gita**. Establishing this as a base, we need to relate the content of all the other chapters. Therefore, if we grasp this 14th verse - **thatha swethair hayair yukthe:** then we understand the entire **Bhagavad Gita**. If not, no matter what else is understood, it is not comprehensive.

**Sanjaya** gave this divine inner message by embedding it in a small verse. The knowledge of the sages is so clear and crisp. We should be ever grateful for the benevolence of **acharyas’** desire to enrich us through the wealth of knowledge which has reached us so beautifully. Let’s proceed and realise this further.

**Jai Srimannarayana!**