**Episode 41 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 41)**

**TOPICS:** The influence of one's inner state on their perception of the world, the symbolic nature of God's weapons and ornaments, and the contrasting effects of the **conch** sounds on the **Pandavas** and **Kauravas**.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Sanjaya**, **Pandavas**, **Kauravas**, **Conch**, **Alwars**, **Vishnuchittha**, **Periyalvar**

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya bhagavad bandhus,

The nature and attitude of a person determine his perception towards his surroundings. There is a saying - those affected with jaundice see everything as yellow. Similarly, when a person feels a certain way about something, he assumes that everyone else feels similarly. If one is a coward, one would feel scared of God too. If a loving person, even an enemy will become the recipient of that love. Therefore, one should never have hatred in one’s mind. If we radiate love towards everything, the atmosphere around us becomes congenial. If we have hatred in our heart, we cannot perceive the goodness of those around us. Even a snake does not bite if it comes across any **satvik** (good) person.

In the past, sages lived cohesively with lions and tigers in **ashrams** (spiritual hermitages). Animals didn’t harm them because sages only had benevolence towards all creatures. Sages never hate anything. They exude positive thoughts towards everyone and equally respect all beings. Because they treated all beings as equal in terms of their connection with God, they did not react based on physical appearance or body type. If a human develops goodness within, he or she is able to spread that goodness around his or her surroundings. If a human develops selfishness within, then his selfishness can spread to surroundings.

Veda says...

yada: vrukshasya sampushpi thasya, du:ra:th gandho: va:thi

the fragrance of a blossomed flower is not limited to that flower alone, it spreads all around

If a flower produces a nice fragrance, it spreads that same nice fragrance. If an object stinks, it spreads this odor, overwhelming the qualities of those surrounding areas. Similarly, a noble person with kindness within, will spread only goodwill to everyone around. If the person allows negative thoughts to inculcate, then that person will only create negative impacts on the surroundings. Therefore, nature is considered a mirror. We only see a reflection of ourselves. A mirror reflects the same feeling we carry within us. If we look at a mirror lovingly, then it reflects our face with love. If we look at a mirror with a crying face, then it reflects the same crying face. Similarly, whatever we feel towards nature, the same feeling will be reflected with a multifold magnitude. Thus, if we find ourselves constantly complaining about flaws everywhere, we need to realize that there are flaws within ourselves.

Topics related to God will automatically enhance joy within God’s devotees. The same causes hatred and anger in those who hate God. God has weapons as well as ornaments. For devotees, even these weapons seem like ornaments. Therefore, when devotees see God with these weapons or ornaments, they are concerned about any evil eye that may affect the beauty of God. An ornament enhances one’s beauty. Similarly, when God is adorned with **Sankha** (conch), and **Chakra** (discus), **Gadha** (mace) and **Khadgam** (machete), His beauty grows multifold. Afraid of the evil eye, **Alwars** (realized saints) offer **mangala asasanams** (blessings for healthy longevity) by singing -

**palla:ndu palla:ndu, pal a:yi rattha:ndu, pala ko:ti nu:ra:yiram**

When reaching such a state of offering **mangalasasanam** to Lord, they forget themselves. Generally, while speaking, we follow a logical sequence. Numerically, we count - one, hundred, thousand, lakh, crore etc., as the order indicates increment or decrement. However, those immersed in love lose track of sequence, they mix it up. They lose sense of what’s up and what’s down.

Of the **Alwars**, there is one who realized the love of God more profoundly than anyone else. By the way, who are **Alwars**? Those great devotees who are completely immersed in God’s love. They became deeply immersed in God’s love and emerged with a devotional intensity that they could not contain within themselves, and thus, shared with everyone. There were 12 **Alwars**, and all sang eloquently, eulogising God. Language is not an obstacle for those singing about God, they sing in whatever language they know. Language is neither a standard, nor a hurdle. It is compared to a plate holding a meal. The contents on the plate are more important than the plate itself. It might be made of silver, gold, clay, porcelain, glass, a leaf, paper, or it may be someone’s hand. The contents of the plate have more importance than the type of plate holding them. This is similar for language. When relishing a subject matter’s essence, we respect the language for being the carrier of that essence. **Alwars** sang in Dravida language. Even though all **Alwars** sang, **Periyalvar** is revered as the top most because of his immense love towards God.

Love also causes fear - the fear of losing one’s object of love. When we love someone or something, we desire to safeguard it from trouble. We always keep it safe, at times not even letting anyone touch it. The great devotee, **Periyalvar**, also named **Vishnuchittha**, the father of our very own **Goda Devi**, loved God immensely and sang for God. Once, God arrived to see him. **Vishnuchitta** noticed his glory and began singing some **slokas** (verses) as a shield of protection, like a mother protecting her children from evil through various means. As he was singing, he thought about the time-period to protect God with these melodious blessings. A doctor prescribes medicine with a dosage frequency, every several hours, or once daily, etc. Similarly, **Vishnuchitta** wanted to express the length of protection. He wanted it for so many years, exclaiming **pal** (many) **andu** (years)! However, that wasn’t enough.

palla:ndu

he added more years, but he still was not content

pal a:yi rathha:ndu

He added several thousands of years, but felt stingy! Only thousands?

pala ko:ti

he added crores (10s of millions) of years, but then...

nu:ru

hundreds of years, then...

a:yiram

again, thousands of years

He went up, then down, then up again! Thousands, then crores, then hundreds, then thousands! His heart could not feel satisfaction with any specific amount of time. Only after deciding on a time-period can one sing mangalam (well-wishes) stating for how long. However, he couldn’t give a number because there was no contentment with limiting it to a specific time period.

pall a:ndu - pall a:ndu - palla:yi rattha:ndu

pala ko:ti - nu:ru - a:yiram

Like this, he commenced offering auspicious wishes to God, concerned about ‘evil eye’ that may affect Lord’s beauty. What beauty? The beauty of God holding weapons, including Sankha and Chakra. He recognized Sankha and Chakra as beauty enhancing ornaments, rather than weapons. As he is a devotee and loves God, he sees beauty and feels happy in any aspect related to God. Everything adds beauty, and thus, he feels the need to protect all those ornaments. However, these same weapons create fear, palpitations in the hearts of those who hate God. Hence, the same Sankha and Chakra which invoked wishes of love from devotees like Vishnuchitta and his daughter Goda Devi, caused enemies to flee out of fear.

In **Bhagavad Gita** chapter one, we see the same divine aspects giving happiness to devotees like **Pandavas**, inculcating fear in detractors like **Duryodhana**. We see this in chapter 1, **sloka** 19. What happened? The **Kaurava** commander-in-chief, **Bhishma**, sounded his conch to invigorate his side. All the warriors followed **Bhishma** and sounded their conches simultaneously. As a response, **Pandavas** also sounded their conches. It’s interesting, the first to sound His conch from **Pandavas** was **Hrushikesa** (**Sri Krushna**) using His conch, **Panchajanya**.

pa:nchajanyam hrushi:ke:sha

Hrushikesa sounded His conch, Panchajanya

We don’t know how long it resonated. It started with **Panchajanya**, then **Devadatta** (Arjuna's conch), then **Anantha Vijayam** (Yudhistira’s conch) and in sequence, conches of other **Pandava** leaders followed.

pruthak pruthak

the resonance continued by each warrior individually, in an organized fashion

It went on for so long that it scared all **Kauravas**. In the 19th **sloka**, **Sanjaya** explained to **Dhrutarashtra** the extent of that fear.

**SLOKA WORD - sa gho:sho: dha:rthara:shtra:na:m hrudaya:ni vyada:rayath | nabhas cha prutthivi:m chaiva thumulo::py anuna:dayan || SLOKA MEANING - The sound of all the conches echoing through Earth and space should affect everyone similarly. However, it did not.**

dhartarashtranam hridayani vyadayat

Sanjaya said, “Hey Dhrutarashtra, all your relatives, your son Suyodhana (Duryodhana), and his army are all Dhartarashtras.”

dhartarashtranam hridayani vyadayat

with sinking hearts, they quivered with fear

Why did the same sound not have the same effect on **Pandavas**? If it stirred fear in one, it must do the same for the rest, right? It gave happiness to **Pandavas**, but shattered the hearts of **Kauravas**. At the same moment, **Sanjaya** concluded, “Your people no longer have absolutely any chance of winning the war.” Basically, **Dhrutarashtra** was blind in every way. Nothing registered, nor did he respond.

We need to understand the reason why this **nadam** (sound) caused fear only in **Kauravas**. Let’s continue in our next sessions.

**Jai Srimannarayana!**