**Episode 42 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 42)**

**TOPICS:** The importance of Chapters 1 and 2 of the **Bhagavad Gita**, the differing intentions of the main characters, the symbolic role of **Arjuna**, and the profound meaning of the name **Hrishikesha**.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Hrishikesha**, **Dhrutarashtra**, **Duryodhana**, **Arjuna**, **Jiva**, **Senses**

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya Bhagavadbandhus,

Chapter 1 and 2 of **Bhagavad Gita** are crucial. If we understand these two initial chapters thoroughly, we grasp the entire **Bhagavad Gita**. If a foundation is strong, we can lay multiple floors. Otherwise, the whole building will collapse. Similarly, if these foundational chapters are not understood correctly, the rest of the chapters will hold no value. We are attempting to learn the essence of chapter 1.

In chapter 1, three people were in grief. First was **Dhrutarashtra**, second was **Duryodhana**, and the third was **Arjuna**.

**Dhrutarashtra** was in grief because he wanted only his sons as heirs to the kingdom. He wanted them to get the kingdom without any struggle. He desired the downfall of the **Pandavas** (the sons of his brother, **Pandu**). By hook or by crook, he desired for his sons to happily rule the entire kingdom. Though **Sanjaya**, a great devotee and intelligent person, narrated the **Bhagavad Gita** exactly as he heard it, it made no difference to **Dhrutarashtra** as his intentions were bad.

girayaha varshadha:ra:bhihi

as rocks are not impacted by rain, Dhrutarashtra remained unaffected by Bhagavad Gita

This was **Dhrutarashtra**. Next was **Duryodhana**. He was consumed by fear. He approached and sought the wise **Dronacharya**. However, he had no interest in actually being guided. He instructed **Dronacharya**, hurt his feelings, and went on his way. The result - **Duryodhana** not only lost his army but became the reason for his own destruction. He was thus known to be a wicked person.

However, **Arjuna** was different. Though he was also arrogant, he remained humble when approaching his guru, God Himself. He was interested to hear from his guru. He had a heart capable of comprehending what was being told. Thus, he has become a model for us. **Arjuna** was the one with the desire to follow God’s instructions. In fact, we don’t know if **Arjuna** had sincere desire or not, but **Bhagavan Sri Krushna** sowed the seed. Chapter 1 of **Bhagavad Gita** explains it clearly.

Where? Let’s ask a few questions before going further. **Bhagavad Gita upadesam** (the divine message) began just before the war commenced. First question, would valiant warriors, ready for war, stay quiet while two people are having a deep, thoughtful conversation? Second, can these two hear each other clearly through the din of a battlefield? Can one understand **Vedanta** (the essence of all **Vedic** wisdom), despite being scared of being attacked from all sides? As a hungry man cannot stay focused on **Vedanta**, those ready for war also cannot focus on it. With **Arjuna** in a similar mood, how did **Sri Krushna** deliver this grand **upadesa**? What were the others doing? What happened to them? How much time did **Bhagavad Gita upadesa** take? We wonder about all these questions. All these questions were answered in chapter one and two with just one word. **Hrishikesha**. It is a very beautiful word. It is seen in chapter 1 right when the divine conches were sounded. It reappears in the second chapter and continues until the **upadesa** begins for **Arjuna**. It appears later on as well.

This word is very important. Why? In fact, **Arjuna** also had pride. He was also arrogant. However, He was better than the rest. It is said, “All are devils but choose a better devil!” All these warriors were the same, but **Sri Krushna** chose a better one, **Arjuna**. As **Arjuna** was relatively stable compared to the others, **Sri Krushna** chose him as an instrument to bestow the greatest divine message to the world.

pardho vatsaha sudhihi bhoktha

a calf is used to initially suckle, enabling a cowherd boy to begin milking who takes 3 portions and leaves 1 portion for the calf

Similarly, God intended to use **Arjuna** as a calf to draw the milk of **Gita** for all those who are interested in relishing it. Hence, He created a situation such that **Arjuna** must question Him. Such divine knowledge should not be revealed without it being sought. Only then He revealed **tattva** (fundamental supreme truth) as if responding to **Arjuna’s** question. He created such a situation where **Arjuna** felt the need to ask a question. The beautiful word explaining this situation is **Hrishikesha**.

Where was it used? Once, **Kauravas** finished sounding their conches following **Bhishma’s** lead, **Pandavas** followed their leader, **Hrishikesha**.

panchajanyam hrishikesaha

after, He sounded the divine conch, Panchajanyam

When God first does something, everyone else is simply part of it. **Sri Krushna’s** divine conch, **Panchajanya**, was the conch that was initially sounded. This was what shattered the hearts of **Kauravas**. Anything related to God gives happiness to devotees. Hence, **Pandavas**, being devoted to **Sri Krushna**, were delighted and energized further with the sound from Lord’s divine conch. However, the same sound scared **Kauravas**, making them feel like they had already lost the war. **Sanjaya** confirmed the same.

hrudayani vyadayat

the hearts of all your sons are shattered

He clearly told **Dhrutarashtra** that it was hopeless for his sons now, expecting he would understand and ask them to return. Nope. **Dhrutarashtra** is not one to do such a thing. This means that anything associated with God gives happiness to devotees and sadness to rogues. Ultimately, that’s what happened. **Hrishikesha** sounded His divine conch, reverberating that divine sound! His name was **Hrishikesha**.

What does this mean?

hrushikas - isudu - niyamakudu

the commander of the hrishikas (senses) is God

What is meant by hrushikas?

hrushyathe: harshayathi ithi hrushika

thesham isaha hrusheka isaha

hrushyathe: harshayathi

hrushyathe: bringing joy when seeing others

harshayathi: bringing joy to the one possessing

This is what our senses do. For example, when our eye sees something attractive, it enjoys the experience. It does not stop there. It stimulates the **manas** to send information to its owner, the **jivatma** (soul). We know there are 5 senses which enable vision, smell, taste, hearing and touch. Our **manas** (mind) is the **kallem** (regulator), for all 5 senses, directing them along one course. We don’t want the 5 senses going in 5 different directions. These 5 senses are like 5 horses to the chariot. We need to ensure they work in a systematized manner. Thus, we need the regulator, **manas** (mind), which controls all 5 senses. The **jiva** (soul), appoints **buddhi** (intellect), as the charioteer to drive the ‘chariot’ the body. The senses are like the five horses. We have five such horses in the body. **Sri Krushna’s** chariot has only 4 horses. However, our body is represented as a chariot with 5 horses, the 5 senses.

The senses always get **harsham** (exultation), when they see something attractive to them. Thus, the senses are called **hrishikas**. When the eye sees an attractive shape, it enjoys it and then relays to the **manas** which in turn offers it **buddhi**, which then passes it to **atma**. Then **atma** relishes it. **Atma** then encourages the eye to see it more and more. Similarly, when the ear, the sensory organ termed **sravanendriyam** (**shrotrendriyam**), hears some wonderful sound, assumes it to be a koyal’s koo-oo and yearns to listen to it again and again. Hearing the sound, the ear enjoys and makes its owner, the **jivatma**, also happy. Thus, it is known as a **hrishikam**. Similarly, the nose also smells something nice and transmits it to the **jivatma**. As it experiences something pleasant and sends it to us, we also enjoy the experience. Similar for the tongue, **rasana indriyam**. It enjoys the taste first, and then makes it’s owner (us) happy by conveying the experience. All these 5 senses are thus, **hrishikas**.

Who is the head of all the senses? Oneself. I want to see, so my eye is seeing. I want to listen, so my ear listens. I want to taste, so my tongue is tasting. I want to touch, so my hand touches. We feel as if we are **isa** (the controller) of the senses. Are we the **isa** for our senses? Are we **hrishikesha**? No. Not at all. We think that the senses are working as per our instructions. Not at all. At one stage, our karmic imprints drive the senses. **Karma** is the **isa** for the senses. Truly, even **karma** is under the jurisdiction of God. He is the **hrishika** (senses), **isa** (controller). Not just for yours and my senses, He is the **isa** for all beings. The **jiva** thinks that he is controlling the senses due to false ego, but this is not reality. One may want to read a book. However, the eyes close and the reader falls asleep automatically after some time without one’s knowledge. If you are **isa** of the senses and they listen to you, then you should decide when to sleep or be awake. Is that the case? Similarly, are you smelling only when you want to smell and restricting it when you don’t want to? Is it possible? Same with all the senses. Are they in our control? It seems so, but in reality, they are not. We are not **hrishikeshas**. There is someone driving us from behind. He is **Hrishika Isa**. God rightly possesses that name. He drives the narrative from start to end. How? Let’s learn in our next session.

**Jai Srimannarayana!**