**Episode 43 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 43)**

**TOPICS:** The deliberate use of specific words in the **Bhagavad Gita**, the deeper meaning of the name **Hrishikesha**, and how **Sri Krushna's** control over the senses (**Hrishikeshatva**) created the perfect setting for the divine discourse.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Hrishikesha**, **Sanjaya**, **Sri Krushna**, **Arjuna**, **Kauravas**, **Pandavas**

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya Bhagavadbandhus,

Dear devotees…

In **Bhagavad Gita**, God utilized each word cautiously. **Sanjaya** accurately repeated the same. **Sri Veda Vyasa Maharshi** offered it to all of us via **Sriman Maha Bharata**. We should take note of the marvels in the first chapter. To narrate what the Lord said, **Sanjaya** used the precise phrase – ‘**Sri Bhagavan Uvacha**’. In the instances where he wants to depict God’s divine activities or people in respect to them, he utilizes relevant descriptive words. Such words are used with an intention to convey a specific mood. If one attempts to recognize this, then its beauty can be experienced. Otherwise, it becomes a common reading experience.

**Hrishikesha** is the name used for **Sri Krushna** when the conches are sounded. In the earlier verse, we talked about two names, **Madhava** and **Pandava**, as well as the intent of using those two names to refer to **Sri Krushna** and **Arjuna** respectively. Similarly, **Hrishikesha** is another word used with specific intention. Why? It addresses questions we may have. What are they? Why was philosophy being discussed right at the outset of war? What were the others doing while this discussion was occurring? Were they seated, quietly attentive, like students in a class? That cannot be the case. So, if everyone is active, how did an undisturbed conversation occur? How did **Sanjaya** listen to all of it and convey it as it is without any challenge? Such questions may arise in our minds. The response to every one of these questions is **Hrishikesha**.

**Hrishikesha** is one who controls senses. **Sri Krishna** controls the senses of all beings. Once **Arjuna** starts to fight, all chances for the **Gita** to be delivered would be lost. If that happens, **Sri Krushna** will not have an opportunity to convey what He intended to. The primary purpose of **Sri Krushna avatara** (incarnation) was to deliver this divine message. That purpose would have been defeated. Therefore, He chose to use the time ahead of battle to deliver His message. It is recommended not to advise anyone without having been requested. Thus, He had to make **Arjuna** ask Him so He could deliver the message. To do so, He began controlling **Arjuna’s** senses. What did He do? **Arjuna** wanted to wage war, and was fully prepared to do so. How do we know this? Verse 20 clearly states so.

**SLOKA WORD - attha vyavastthitha:n drushtwa: dha:rthara:shtra:n kapidhwajaha | pravrutthe: sasthra sampa:the: dhanur udyamya pa:ndavaha || SLOKA MEANING - Hrishikesha is one who controls senses. Sri Krishna controls the senses of all beings. Once Arjuna starts to fight, all chances for the Gita to be delivered would be lost. If that happens, Sri Krushna will not have an opportunity to convey what He intended to. The primary purpose of Sri Krushna avatara (incarnation) was to deliver this divine message. That purpose would have been defeated. Therefore, He chose to use the time ahead of battle to deliver His message. It is recommended not to advise anyone without having been requested. Thus, He had to make Arjuna ask Him so He could deliver the message. To do so, He began controlling Arjuna’s senses. What did He do? Arjuna wanted to wage war, and was fully prepared to do so. How do we know this? Verse 20 clearly states so.**

hrushi:ke:sam thada: va:kyam idama:ha mahi:pathe:

hey Mahipate (Dhrutarashtra) - Pandava spoke thus with Hrishikesha

Dhanuhu Udhyamya

hoisting his bow, the Gandiva

Pravrutthe: sasthra sampa:the

when the firing of weapons was about to commence

What was he doing, who was he?

Kapi dhwajaha

on whose chariot is there a flag with Hanuman on it? Arjuna's!

After doing what?

Drushtwa:

after glancing

At whom?

Dhartharashtran

at all the Kauravas

How are they?

Vyavastthitan

all arrayed and assembled in their positions

This was the scene. **Kauravas** were prepared for war as they sounded their conches, assuming their respective positions ready to fight. As **Kapi Dhwaja** (**Arjuna**) saw all of them, he was inspired to say something. Until then, he did not feel this. He was only inspired to fight. But now he was inspired to do something else.

dhanurudyamya

he was holding up the bow, ready to fight, and then felt something different

Why?

Because Hrishikesha, Sri Krushna, was next to him. Sri Krishna felt, “if Arjuna begins to shoot arrows, then all chances are lost. Let’s pause this situation.” Thus, He began exercising Hrishikeshatva (His ability to control senses of all beings). What happened then? Arjuna felt like he needed to say something. What did he say?

arjuna uvacha

he said the following

He never thought he would say something like this. He was under the influence of something beyond His control. What was it?

senayor ubhayor madhye: rattham stthapaya me:chutha! |

yavad etan nirikshe:ham yoddhukaman avastthitan ||

**Arjuna** was requesting **Achyutha** (**Sri Krushna**), to take the chariot between the two armies assembled in the battlefield. Why?

yavad etan nirikshe:ham yoddhukaman avastthitan

to observe all the warriors together

**Arjuna** knows who the commander-in-chief and prime warriors on the other side are. Then, why did he feel the need to examine the situation? Let’s see what he asked.

yavad etan nirikshe:ham yoddhukaman avastthitan

I want to see all those assembled to fight

Who do you want to see?

kair maya: saha yoddhavyam asmin rana samudyame: ||

yotsyamanan avekshe:ham ya etethra samagathaha |

There are two ways in which he expressed it.

kair maya: saha, kair saha

to assess who we have in our own army

yotsyamanan avekshe:ham ya etethra samagathaha

to see who have assembled to fight against us

dhartharashtrasya durbuddheh yuddheh priya chikirshavaha

those here to please Dhrutarashtra’s son, Suyodhana, are on the opposite side

He expressed that he wanted to see those on his side and those on the opposite side. He asked for the chariot to be positioned for that purpose. **Hrishikeshatva** (the ability to control the senses of any being), is taking another form.

The first form of **Hrishikeshatva** was seen when sounding the conches. He sounded them in a way to weaken the hearts of **Dhrutarashtra’s** army. We discussed what **Hrishikeshatva** means. It is the ability to control the senses of all beings. What did that ability do? It immobilized the entire army. **Kauravas** and their army stood still like statues, in fear. When one pauses and mutes a movie on tv, everything remains ‘still’ in the exact posture at that time.

Similarly, once **Kauravas** were struck by fear, they stood still. **Arjuna** wanted to see them in whatever position they were in. **Pandavas** were also still, however, happy and energized. **Kauravas** stood like statues, struck with fear. **Pandavas** became like statues, out of happiness. **Hrishikesha**, He controlled all the senses. None of them had control over their own senses. We too don’t have control of our senses. The senses don’t listen to us. We think we have control. You may say you are closing eyes or shutting the ears or mouth whenever you need to. You may call this control but we are using senses with conditioned freedom. It is not absolute freedom, but it is conditioned freedom just like a fish in a pond. It looks as if a fish is freely swimming in an aquarium. However, can the fish leave it? No. It has glass walls on all the four sides, top and bottom. The freedom it experiences is between four glass walls, nothing beyond those boundaries. Your senses are the same way. God has restricted the freedom of the senses. Even if one does **sadhana** (practice) to overcome it, it’s only possible to some extent. We won’t be able to enjoy absolute freedom at any time while in this body. God controls everyone’s senses, irrespective of who or what type of being. Not only for **Kauravas** and **Pandavas**, He controlled the senses of everyone, including **devatas** (celestial beings) and sages gathered to witness the battle. Everyone except **Arjuna**.

Similar to YouTube, when we have a messaging mechanism in place, we can selectively have a private chat or broadcast it to all. Similarly, **Sri Krushna** left **Arjuna’s** senses functional to the extent necessary. Everyone else’s senses were disabled. Therefore, no matter how long the conversation was, everyone else remained still. Understanding this kind of **Hrishikeshatva**, answers all our earlier questions. What was everyone doing? They were all muted, i.e. still mode. Why would everyone who came to fight remain quiet during this conversation? Because they were all muted, i.e. still mode. Would they all understand the philosophy? Because they were in still mode, it is not required that they understand anything. They remained still and the two had their conversation. The communication between the two was uninterrupted, without distortion. The answer for all the questions lies in this single name of God, **Hrishikesha**! What else can **Hrishikesham** do? Let’s find out further.

**Jai Srimannarayana!**