

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 11: Viśvarūpa-Darśana-Yoga

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YouTube Link: https://youtu.be/muir_3yfZAE

The Divine vision of the Cosmic Form

The 11th chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is the Viśhwarūpa Darśhana Yoga- Yoga of the Vision of the Universal Form.

The sacred session of the discourse started with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, and prayers to the Lotus feet of **Parampita Paramātmā Śrī Bhagavān**, the divine masters and Gītā Ma invoking blessings of all powerful, Omniscient to rid the mind of darkness and guide towards the realization of the Supreme Knowledge.

The 11th chapter is one of the most enchanting chapters in the Gītā. So far, Śrī Bhagavān and Arjuna were having conversation about what Arjuna should be doing. Arjuna was in a confused and baffled state of mind, not wanting to commit any sin by killing his own kith and kin.

HE started giving Arjuna the true knowledge, and Arjuna gradually realized that the person seated in front of him was not an ordinary human being, but the Supreme Divine, with powers much beyond his imagination, and worthy of deep respect and salutations. HE was the ruler and controller of the entire world and beyond.

In the tenth chapter, **Vibhūti Yoga**, Śrī Bhagavān explained about his 82 *Vibhūtis*, the power stations through which one can be reminded of the glory of the Paramātmā. HE emphasized that these *Vibhūtis* were only a fraction of his glory, as explained in the last two shlokas.

Shloka 10-41

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसंभवम्॥

Shloka 10-42

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्॥

The Vibhūtis were a concise version of HIS cosmic power, and the multiple universes, including the Milky Way, were but a small fraction. The ancient scriptures also glorify that gigantic universes are situated in each and every part of the Paramātmā's body.

Realizing the immense power HIS friendly charioteer possessed, Arjuna's devotion for Śrī Bhagavān was intensified and he was also curious and eager to see the Viśhwarūpa the Cosmic form in person.

11.1

arjuna uvāca
madanugrahāya paRāmaṃ(ñ), guhyamadyātmasaññitam,
yattvayoktaṃ(m) vacastena, moho'yaṃ(m) vigato mama. 11.1

Arjuna said :

Thanks to the most profound words of spiritual wisdom that You have spoken out of kindness to me, this delusion of mine has entirely disappeared.

Arjuna acknowledged that HE has explained the top secret [**PaRāmaṃ(ñ)**], of the Supreme Knowledge of ātmā (**adyātmasaññitam**) out of compassion for him (madanugrahāya). The adjectives, topmost secret and compassion, reveal the intimate relationship between Śrī Bhagavan and Arjuna.

All sadhakas should strive to inculcate the traits of Arjuna, so as to become dear to the Paramātmā. HIS words worked as the light that dispelled the darkness created by Arjuna's delusion and ignorance (**moha**) and enlightening him. Till now, Arjuna's mind was clouded with ignorance that he was the doer of all actions, unaware of the fact that Śrī Bhagavan is the actual doer, and that HE has already decided the end-result of everything that happens in the Universe. Further, he was deluded that death was the final outcome of the war. HIS words that ātmā is imperishable and cannot be killed, wiped away his delusion.

11.2

bhavāpyayau hi bhūtānāṃ(m), śrutau vistaraśo mayā,
tvattaḥ(kh) kamalapatrākṣa, mähātmyamapi cāvayam. 11.2

For, Kṛṣṇa, I have heard from You in detail an account of the evolution and dissolution of beings, and also Your immortal glory.

Arjuna continued that so far, he heard in detail that Śrī Bhagavan is the penultimate source of all creatures.

This fact was beautifully rendered in a couple of shlokas in chapter 10 where HE had said:

that 'I am the cause of all creation'

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः।

अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च॥10.20॥

'I am the seed of all things, movable and immovable' in10-39.

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन।

न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम्॥10.39॥

This shloka also throws light on Arjuna's intelligence. He secretly desired to see the Cosmic form, and approached Śrī Krishna gently, by describing HIM with adjectives like Avyaya and Kamalapatrākṣa,. He emphasized that Bhagavān's greatness was Avyayam, ever-permanent and could not be diminished. Further, he addressed HIM as Kamalapatrākṣa, O' Lotus - Eyed One.

Similarly, although Śrī Krishna is the central part of the Universe, HE is still detached from it and remains unaffected. Here again, it was highlighted that sadhaks should try to learn this art of gentle approach and request, from Arjuna.

11.3

**evametadyathāttha tvam, ātmānaṃ(m) parameśvara,
draṣṭumicchāmi te rūpam, aiśvaraṃ(m) puruṣottama. 11.3**

Lord, You are precisely what You declare Yourself to be. But I long to see Your divine form possessed of wisdom, glory, energy, strength, valour and effulgence, O Puruṣottama, the Supreme Being!

Arjuna conceded that all that HE, the Puruṣottama, said so far was the ultimate truth, and that he wished to see that Cosmic form with his own eyes. This surprised Śrī Krishna, who was baffled that Arjuna wished to see more.

These emotions that flow between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna are beautifully explained in the Jnaneshwari, the only text that gives us an insight into the emotions underlying the dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

11.4

**manyase yadi tacchakyaṃ(m), mayā draṣṭumiti prabho,
yogeśvara tato me tvam(n), darśayātmānavyayam. 11.4**

Kṛṣṇa, if You think that it can be seen by me, then, O Lord of Yoga, reveal to me Your imperishable form.

Arjuna very humbly and respectfully requested the Paramātmā to reveal HIS imperishable form, if HE thought that it was possible for him to see it.

The word 'possible' implies two meanings:

- **1** Having the capacity
- **2** Being qualified.

Arjuna was aware that in order to obtain any desired object, one had to be both capable of obtaining it and also qualified enough to receive it. If one desires to become an Engineer, that person should have the capacity to get through the entrance examination and his competence be approved by the examiners. This rule is the same for all matters.

Arjuna was pondering about his capacity and competence to view the Cosmic form. He did not address Śrī Krishna as his friend, but recognized HIM as **Yogeśvara, the Master of Yoga**, who had the capacity to connect things together. Even if Arjuna lacked the capacity, he was implying that HE had the power to give him the capacity. Here again, **Arjuna teaches us the art of requesting**. He teaches that one should never cross the boundaries, and should approach in a humble and polite manner.

Yogeśvara is the master of all Yogas, and has the capacity to connect things.

Jnaneshwar Maharaj was a Yogeśvara on his own. As a child, he was challenged to prove his belief that all ātmās are the same and are connected. He was asked to make a buffalo (male) recite the Vedas that he was well versed in. Surrendering to Śrī Krishna, Jnaneshwar Maharaj ji put his hand over the buffalo's head, and started chanting the Vedas. The buffalo too started reciting the shlokas, much to everyone's surprise. Such is the power of Yogeśvara.

It is also explained in Śrī Krishna stuti ‘

**Mookam Karoti Vachalam Pangun Langhayate Girim;
Yatkrupa taham vande paramananda Mādhavam’,**

by the grace Yogeśvara, even the mute can speak, and lame can climb mountains!

Arjuna was aware of the power of Yogeśvara, and hence requested HIM to give him the capacity to view HIS true form.

Jnaneshwar Maharaj ji beautifully explains that Arjuna has cast a magical spell on Śrī Krishna, and that HE is totally in love with Arjuna, and concedes to all his requests.

11.5

**śrībhagavānuvāca
paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi, śataśo'tha sahasraśaḥ,
nānāvidhāni divyāni, nānāvarṇākṛtīni ca. 11.5**

Śrī Bhagavān said :

Arjuna, behold My manifold, multifarious divine forms of various colours and shapes, in their hundreds and thousands.

Śrī Krishna obliged to Arjuna's request, and revealed HIS Cosmic form, composed of countless divine forms of different sizes, colours and shapes, with infinite glories.

11.6

**paśyādityānvasūnrudrān, aśvinau marutastathā,
bahūnyadr̥ṣṭapūrvāṇi, paśyāścaryāṇi bhārata. 11.6**

Behold in Me, Arjuna, the twelve sons of Aditi, the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudrās (gods of destruction), the two Aśvinīkumāras (the twin-born physicians of gods) and the forty-nine Maruts (wind-gods), and witness many more wonderful forms never seen before.

Śrī Krishna urged Arjuna to see all that was to be seen, the great wonders that were never seen by anyone else.

The wonders include the **33 Koti Devatas**

- 12 sons of Aditi,
- 8 Vasus,
- 11 Rudras,
- 2 Ashwin kumars, (the twin born celestial physicians) *totaling to 33*. People misunderstand the 33 koti devatas described in our scriptures as 33 crores (numeric) devatas. But **koti means the apex** (prime) demigods that can be seen in the Cosmic form of the Paramātmā.

- and the 49 Marutas.

Śrī Krishna invited Arjuna to see these devatas as well as many more marvels that were never seen by anyone before. It is to be noted that Arjuna had visited the Devaloka and had spent significant time with the devatas, and hence was aware of the divine splendour of the Swargloka. Yet, what Śrī Krishna was revealing was way beyond what Arjuna could perceive.

11.7

**ihākasthaṃ(ñ) jagatkṛtsnaṃ(m), paśyādya sacarācaram,
mama dehe guḍākeśa, yaccānyaddraṣṭumicchasi. 11.7**

Arjuna, behold as concentrated within this body of Mine the entire creation consisting of both the moving and the unmoving beings, and whatever else you desire to see.

Here Paramātmā addressed Arjuna as Gudakesha and continued saying to him that the entire Cosmos was present in HIS body, and whatever can be imagined, including movable and immovable things, Arjuna could see in HIS body.

Arjuna was also known as Gudakesha (Gudaka sleep; esha master = Master of sleep). He could sleep in any circumstances and could also stay without sleeping for as long as he wished. By addressing him as Gudakesha, HE was reminding Arjuna that as someone who has mastered his sleep, he should be active and listen attentively to what HE was saying.

Although Śrī Krishna was repeatedly asking him to see the Cosmic form, Arjuna was not able to see anything and he was perplexed. Śrī Krishna realised that Arjuna is humanly incapacitated to see the Cosmic form. This dilemma and non-verbal communication is beautifully captured and explained in Jyaneshwari.

11.8

**na tu mām(m) śakyase draṣṭum, anenaiva svacakṣuṣā,
divyaṃ(n) dadāmi te cakṣuḥ(ph), paśya me yogamaśvaram. 11.8**

But surely you cannot see Me with these physical eyes of yours; therefore, I vouchsafe to you the divine eye. With this you behold My divine power of Yoga.

Śrī Krishna acknowledged that Arjuna was not able to see this Cosmic form with his physical vision.

This was explained with an analogy given by Swami ji:

An illiterate man walked into a shop selling reading glasses, and asked for one, to help him read. The shop keeper tried different lenses on him to check the compatibility, but was perplexed that the customer was not able to read with any of the lenses. Finally, he realised that the customer was illiterate who thought that the glasses would help him read literally. Just like the illiterate customer who did not have the capacity to read, Arjuna too did not have the capacity to see the Cosmic form. Human's physical vision is limited.

Bhagavān decided to endow Arjuna with the divine vision (*Divya Dhristi*) so that he would be able to view the paranormal Cosmic form. It is to be recollected that this is the second time the Divya Drishti appears in the Gītā.

Earlier, before the start of the war, Maharishi Vedavyas ji offered it to the blind king Dhritarashtra so that he could see the war between his sons and their cousins. But Dhritarashtra did not wish to see the evils of the war in his old age. He asked for it to be given to his aid, Sanjaya, who could then narrate to him the happenings of the war.

This enabled Sanjaya also to see the Cosmic form of the Paramātmā.

11.9

**sañjaya uvāca
evamuktvā tato rājan, mahāyogeśvaro hariḥ,
darśayāmāsa pārthāya, paRāmaṃ(m) rūpamaiśvaram. 11.9**

Sañjaya said :

My lord! having spoken thus, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme Master of Yoga, forthwith revealed to Arjuna His supremely glorious divine Form.

Sanjaya beautifully described what he could see through his Divya dhristi. He addressed Śrī Krishna as '**Mahayogesvaro Hariḥ**' because he could see Śrī Vishnu in the Cosmic form. He informed king Dhritarashtra that the Master of Yoga, Śrī Vishnu bestowed the Divya Dhristi to Arjuna, and revealed his divine glorious form in its entirety.

11.10

**anekaVāktranayanam, anekādbhutadarśanam,
anekadivyaḥbharāṇaṃ(n), divyānekodyatāyudham. 11.10**

Arjuna saw the supreme Deity possessing many mouths and eyes, presenting many a wonderful sight, decked with many divine ornaments, wielding many uplifted divine weapons,

The cosmic form was divine with innumerable faces and eyes with different expressions, wearing divine ornaments, and wielding different weapons that were never seen before. It was a wonderful sight to behold!

The phrase **anekādbhutadarśanam** was used as an example to emphasize the importance of taking care about *deergha* and *rasva* pronunciation during recitation of the shlokas.

Adbhuta dharshanam means divine and wonderful sight. Making the rasva Bhu into deergha Bhū will give a wrong meaning of Bhūta darshanam.

11.11

**divyamalyāmaradharaṃ(n), divyagandhānulepanam,
sarvāścaryamayaṃ(n) devam, anantaṃ(m) viśvatomukham. 11.11**

wearing divine garlands and vestments, anointed all over with divine fragrances, full of all wonders, infinite and having faces on all sides.

Sanjaya continued describing the might of the wonderful scene that was not viewed ever before. The Cosmic form was adorned with divine garlands of flowers and pearls, anointed with divine fragrance that enchanted everyone. The Divine form was not limited by any space, it was infinite, and full of wonders.

11.12

divi sūryasahasrasya, bhavedyugapadutthitā, yadi bhāḥ(s) sadṛśī sā syād, bhāsastasya mahātmanaḥ. 11.12

If there be the effulgence of a thousand suns bursting forth all at once in the heavens, even that would hardly approach the splendour of the mighty Lord.

Such was the splendour of the form that it's radiant blaze (bhava) was so brilliant, equal to thousands of Suns shining together (**yugapadutthita**), and beyond the capacity of one's imagination.

On the side line, it was recollected that our dear country has a glorious and beautiful name, Bharata (Bha = radiance/ illumination; rata= seeking).

This shloka was made more famous when it was quoted by Dr J Robert Oppenheimer, the father of the atomic bomb. He was enchanted by Sanskrit language and an ardent seeker of Sanskrit shlokas.

On 16th July 1945, a nuclear test was conducted, and he witnessed it from an aircraft. The radiance of the blast that filled the sky was so brilliant, that he was reminded of this shloka. It was emphasized that no matter in which part of the world one may be, seekers of science would benefit if they study our scriptures.

11.13

tatraikasthaṃ(ñ) jagatkṛtsnaṃ(m), pravibhaktamanekadhā, apaśyaddevadevasya, śarīre pañḍavastadā. 11.13

Concentrated at one place in the person of that supreme Deity, Arjuna then beheld the whole universe with its manifold divisions.

Sanjaya further continued that different creatures with distinctly different features, were present in one place, that is, the body of the divine Cosmic form.

11.14

tataḥ(s) sa vismayāviṣṭo, hṛṣṭaromā dhanañjayaḥ, praṇamya śirasā devaṃ(ñ), kṛtāñjalirabhāṣata. 11.14

Then Arjuna, full of wonder and with the hair standing on end, reverentially bowed his head to the divine Lord, and with folded hands addressed Him thus.

Arjuna was baffled and gripped (*avisto*) with awe by the vision in front of him, that he was mesmerised with hair raising sensations, and he bowed down with folded hands (*krtanjali*) to the Divine Persona in front of him.

Wherever Arjuna's emotion changes drastically in the Gītā, the chanda or meter of the shloka also changes from *Anushtup* to *Trishtup chanda*. This was observed in the 2nd chapter too, when he was drowning in sorrow:

गुरूनहत्वा हि महानुभावान् श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।
हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥2.5॥

Similarly, the emotionally charged Arjuna sang the remaining shlokas in the *trishtup chanda*.

11.15

arjuna uvāca
paśyāmi devāṃstava deva dehe,
sarvāṃstathā bhūtaviśeṣasaṅghān,
brahmāṇamīsaṃ(ñ) kamalāsanastham,
ṛṣīṃśca sarvānuragāṃśca divyān. 11.15

Arjuna said :

Lord, I behold within Your body all gods and hosts of different beings, Brahmā throned on his lotus-seat, Śiva and all Ṛṣis and celestial serpents.

Arjuna started to describe the beautiful glory of the vision in front of him, in a melodious rhythm. The beautiful details will be covered in the next session.

The session concluded by offering the seva at the feet of Śrī Krishna and Paramapujya Swami Govind Dev Giri ji Maharaj.

Questions and Answers session

Shashikala ji

Q: What is the meaning of *Gudakesha*?

A: *Gudakesha* has two meanings. One who has mastered sleep (*Gudaka* =sleep; *eesha* = master). Another meaning is one who has curly hair. But here, 'one who has mastered sleep' is more apt.

Vudushi Chaudhuryji

Q: Does shloka 13 imply that the different creatures were seen in different parts of the Cosmic body.

A: It means that different creatures with distinct features are found together in one place, that is the Cosmic body.

Suresh ji

Q: Bhagavān gives the *divya dhristi* to Arjuna in shloka 8. Sanjaya describes about it from shloka 9. Did Sanjaya also get to see the divine form?

A: Sanjaya obtained the *divya dhristi* from Maharishi Vedavyas ji, and so he too could see the divine form. The only difference between Arjuna and Sanjaya was that Arjuna was seeing it in realtime, like watching a cricket match live in the stadium, while Sanjaya was seeing it as a telecast on the television.



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Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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