

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 11: Viśvarūpa-Darśana-Yoga

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## The essence of Gītā: Attaining HIM

॥ श्री ॥

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

We begin this auspicious chapter where Bhagavān's Universal form is revealed with the traditional lighting of the lamp and prayers to the Gurus, Ma Saraswati and HIS Viśhwarūpa Dhyānam!!

In the previous sessions, one saw that as Bhagavān displayed HIS magnificent cosmic form; Arjuna initially after being struck with wonder, began experiencing anxiety. This anxiety came from the deepest form of human fear that associates all that is Divine to be pleasant and opulent. Being a witness to the inimical aspects of divinity, Arjuna was bewildered; seeing death and destruction simultaneously with creation, he was fearful and after witnessing HIS all-powerful nature, he began lamenting his previous behaviour with Bhagavān; when he was still thinking of HIM as his friend. "Was I too rude HIM? Oh no! Have I not made fun of HIM? But HE is the master of existence! What could be the consequences of such actions then?" Arjuna like any ordinary person began questioning his behaviour with Bhagavān, now realising HIM to be the Supreme!

So, then Arjuna requested Jagadishvara, to bestow him with the form that he was familiar with, his opulent four-armed form of Narayana, of Śrī Hari! He asked Bhagavān to grant him this prayer and wind up HIS universal form!

As a pilgrim after traversing the earth with joy, returns home to enjoy a settled life, so HIS four-armed figure was a haven for the Devotees. All yogic practices lead to this figure and scriptural study also culminate in it. And all sacrificial acts, pilgrimages and acts of charity and merit come to fructification in this Divine figure of Narayana. Arjuna was fond and longing to witness that Divine figure, becoming impatient to have a sight of it!

Arjuna thus asked Ishvara, the deity of all the Devatās; the one who knows the secrets in others'

minds and who created this universe, requesting HIS grace and to give him a vision of this Divine figure! HIS opulent form: where, it was as if the blue luster of that four-armed figure has bestowed colour to the blue lotus and the azure sky and lent its splendour to the sapphire. It was as though emerald is exuding fragrance, or rapturous joy has sprouted arms and the cupid himself, by playing in the lap of Narayana as HE became a sight for sore eyes. The crown, which adorned the head of Madhava, looked more splendid because of HIS handsome head; the luster of HIS body added splendour to the ornaments with which it was decked. Shri Hari, wearing the Vaijayanti necklace around HIS neck, looked handsome like a cloud in the midst of a rainbow. With the mace in one hand, the softly lustrous discus in the other; Arjuna was anxious to see HIM thus....

To this, Bhagavān chided Arjuna that the mysterious and extremely difficult to attain sight of HIM; one that was given only to him until then; A form that couldn't be witnessed by Yoga, Tapa, Shastra or Yajñas; such was the mysterious cosmic form! And yet, Arjuna requested for HIM to appear as Narayana! And enraptured with love for HIS Devotee Arjuna, Bhagavān complied! HE withdrew his Divine luster, which had flooded the world and condensed it, in HIS *chaturbhuj* form. Just as all living creatures are merged in the Absolute, or the entire tree is stored in the seed or the dream vanishes in the waking state, so Paramātmā compressed HIS cosmic form and displayed HIS ethereal four-armed form!!

The Divine cosmic form was so rare that there are no scriptures that described it before being witnessed by Arjuna. Bhagavān too confirmed this when HE declared that no one had witnessed HIS universal form before! And such was HIS love for Arjuna that HE complied with his wishes again and again.

How could one attain HIS grace like Arjuna then? How could one get a glimpse of the mystic Divine Cosmic form?

Bhagavān HIMSELF guides us in the last 4 shlokas of this chapter....

## 11.52

**śrībhagavānuvāca**  
**sudurdarśam(m) rūpaṃ(n), dr̥ṣṭavānasi yanmama,**  
**devā apyasya rūpasya, nityaṃ(n) darśanakāñkṣiṇaḥ. 11.52**

Śrī Bhagavān said :

This form of Mine (with four-arms) which you have just seen, is exceedingly difficult to behold. Even the gods are always eager to see this form.

Śrī Bhagavān said that this **su-durdarśam**, very rarely seen form of HIS which he had seen is rarely seen by others. Even the Devatās forever hanker to have darśana (**darśana-kāñkṣiṇaḥ**) of this form.

So rare was this form that it was inaccessible to most of them.

## 11.53

**nāhaṃ(m) vedairna tapasā, na dānena na cejyayā,  
śakya evaṃvidho draṣṭuṃ(n), dr̥ṣṭavānasi māṃ(m) yathā. 11.53**

Neither by study of the Vedas, nor by penance, nor again by charity, nor even by rituals can I be seen in this form (with four-arms) as you have seen Me.

It was not possible to see this extremely rare form of HIS, which he had seen, merely by studying the Vedas (**vedaiḥ**), practising austerities (**tapasā**) giving in charity (**dānena**) or performing sacrifices (**ijyayā**).

This needed one to move beyond the mere aspiration of being in union with HIM, of Yoga; But happens when one becomes a Bhakta!

**Who becomes a Bhakta?**

The one who moves on from the stage of being **Vibhakta**! Vibhakta is the one who is separated, denoting the duality of Bhagavān and Parameśvara; while the Bhakta loses the sense of his own identity of Self, wherein, he merely exists as an extension of HIM! Nay he becomes HIM, verily experiencing HIM as **tatvam asi!** (Thou art that).

**The transition of a devotee from understanding the Divine, to realising HIM is the transformation of his Self, where the Ātman recognises itself to be a part of Paramātmā!**

As mentioned again and again, HE could only be attained by the bhakti rendered to HIM by HIS pure-hearted devotees. HE could never be controlled by those who only study scriptures, or who perform mystic yoga, pious acts, austerity or renunciation.

This process is elaborate but not elusive. One may ask, "what was the need for all various aspects of worship then? Couldn't we just be HIS Devotee?"

One needs to understand the devotion Bhagavān speaks of is not a basic one, but the one where there no longer remains a separate identity of the Bhakta and only Bhagavān exists! The processes of Yoga, reading of scriptures etc., are part of that process of transitioning of the "I" to "HIM". Just as Lonavala is a station not a destination enroute to Mumbai from Pune; Similarly, *Sādhana* is a tool to reach HIM and not the goal itself.

Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya ji stated in his beautiful composition of "**Bhaja Govindam**"

**भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं, गोविन्दं भज मूढमते।**

**संप्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले, नहि नहि रक्षति दुकृञ् करणे ॥१॥**

"Worship Govinda, Worship Govinda, Worship Govinda. Oh, ignorant fool! Rules of Grammar will not save you at the time of your death."

Shankaracharya ji reminds us that the entire purpose of worship by chanting stotras or stutis is not the process but worship itself. And the worship is to generate a Bhāva of a devotee towards Bhagavān! Instead of caring about the nuances of grammar, one may concentrate on HIM.

This is the difference between "knowing" and "realising" HIM.

All paths of worship and meditation are tools to develop that Bhāva, where the Bhakta is no longer separate from his Bhagavān. His identity dissolves into being an extension of HIM. There only remains

HIM. This is perhaps the most difficult as one has to let go; Just as a droplet can no longer remain a droplet when merging into the sacred Ganga; the Devotee in his devotion is no longer separate from his deity!

Our festivals too guide us to a similar path...

Soon, Ganeshji shall arrive for 10 days. During that period, we celebrate HIS arrival and adore HIM, worship HIM. HE becomes a part of our household. On the 10th day as HE returns to HIS abode, one does not mourn but celebrate. As the Visarjan is symbolic of the deity being now extending beyond HIS form to the water in which HE dissolves. HE becomes part of Nature, which is greater than a mere figurine and a cause for celebration.

Whether it is the worship of the seas during Rakhi, Worship of the mountains during Govardhan Puja; we worship all aspects of creation; be it the bulls, the cows or snakes, all of them are worshipped as Divine in one form of the other. One is utilising them to realise the oneness of all, where HE is them, they are HIM! Similarly, as the devotee progresses in his sadhana, the goal is to merge with HIM, not as distinct entities but simply being HIM!

## 11.54

### **bhaktyā tvananyayā śakya, ahamevaṃvidho'rjuna, jñātum(n) draṣṭum(ñ) ca tatvena, praveṣṭum(ñ) ca parantapa. 11.54**

Through single-minded devotion, however, I can be seen in this form (with four-arms), nay, known in essence and even entered into, O valiant Arjuna.

Bhagavān reiterated that the vision of this pleasing form is possible only to one with exclusive devotion (**ananyā-bhakti**). HE declared that only by unalloyed devotion can HE be known and seen as **evaṃ-vidhaḥ**, as HE was, standing before him. Thereby, on receiving HIS divine vision, HE told **Parantapa**, scorcher of foes, one could enter into union with HIM (**praveṣṭum**).

There have been many renditions of the different characters of Mahabharata. In some of them one may see that it glorifies Karna to the extent that he not only rivals Arjuna in many aspects but also eclipses in many. However, this is simply not true. Arjuna as a Warrior and as a devotee exceeded all. Here, Bhagavān showcased his prowess as HE mentioned him as Parantapa!

We are fortunate to learn Gītā, which is also known as the essence of the Vedas. Knowing HIM, realising HIM can be only through ananyayā Bhakti. Gītā is a steppingstone towards that direction, where the mind is filled with only HIM. The essence us becomes HIM. This requires us to unlearn the behavioural patterns developed since childhood.

Originally, we all begin with a reduced sense of Self. The newborns have no sense of distinct identity from their mothers. The first time the dissociation happens, is when the child insistent on going near the mother realises that it can only be done if she agrees. If not at an opportune moment she refuses to cuddle him or take him near her. As we grow older, our sense of distinction between people increases. So, if a person wishes to acknowledge or smile at an acquaintance, they might think twice!

Gradually, we display joy towards others in a restrained manner and also the bonding encounters a wall. After encountering several such incidents, one becomes entrapped in their own minds, restraining themselves to display emotions; where, the primary roadblock becomes the assumption of

the reaction they may face from the other party.

This also becomes the biggest obstacle when one becomes a devotee. The sadhak is mindful of the deity's reaction and thus, his worship is restricted! A bhakta on the other hand has no such compunction; since, he doesn't see himself as separated from HIS deity. All his actions are for HIM! This transition of a *sadhaka* to a *Bhakta* cannot just be overcome through a difference of vision and Bhāva, but requires a tremendous leap of faith...

Thus, devotion requires a reduction of ego to a point where, there is no self-awareness. Only then, does a complete surrender towards the Divine occurs.

A beautiful composition displays the required attitude!

**अब सौंप दिया इस जीवन का, सब भार तुम्हारे हाथों में,  
है जीत तुम्हारे हाथों में, और हार तुम्हारे हाथों में ॥**

मेरा निश्चय बस एक यही, एक बार तुम्हे पा जाऊं मैं,  
अर्पण कर दूँ दुनिया भर का, सब प्यार तुम्हारे हाथों में ॥

जो जग में रहूँ तो ऐसे रहूँ, ज्यों जल में कमल का फूल रहे,  
मेरे गुण दोष समर्पित हों, करतार तुम्हारे हाथों में ॥

यदि मानव का मुझे जनम मिले, तो तब चरणों का पुजारी बनूँ  
इस पूजा की एक एक रग का, हो तार तुम्हारे हाथों में ॥

जब जब संसार का कैदी बनूँ, निष्काम भाव से कर्म करूँ,  
फिर अंत समय में प्राण तजूँ, निराकार तुम्हारे हाथों में ॥

मुझमें तुझमें बस भेद यही, मैं नर हूँ तुम नारायण हो,  
मैं हूँ संसार के हाथों में, संसार तुम्हारे हाथों में ॥

अब सौंप दिया इस जीवन का, सब भार तुम्हारे हाथों में,  
है जीत तुम्हारे हाथों में, और हार तुम्हारे हाथों में ॥





This beautiful composition talks about the surrender of a devotee; where, he surrenders all his wins and losses towards Paramātmā. Where the goal of a devotee remains HIM alone, where even a glimpse of HIM is enough and he only needs an opportunity to shower all his love and affection for HIM. Where he could remain distinct from this world as a lotus remains unaffected from the muddy water.

All his actions shouldn't be for himself but for HIM. When born as a human a devotee only wishes to be able to worship HIM, dedicate himself for HIM and he becomes a medium in the manner his worship is undertaken. As a prisoner of this material world, his actions should be done without attachment; and when he finally leaves this mortal world it should be in HIS formless aspect. If HE is Narayana, then may he become HIS Nara, may he become the human aspect to HIS Divine, such that there remains no distinction between the two. The devotees surrender to HIM, the supreme where his life, his victories and losses are all for HIM alone!!

## **matkarmakṛmatparamo, madbhaktaḥ(s) saṅgavarjitaḥ, nirvairah(s) sarvabhūteṣu, yaḥ(s) sa māmeti pāṇḍava. 11.55**

Arjuna, he who performs all his duties for My sake, depends on Me, is devoted to Me, has no attachment, and is free from malice towards all beings, reaches Me.

Now in this verse beginning with **mat-karma-kṛt**, Śrī Bhagavān elaborated on the characteristics of HIS exclusive devotees (**ananya-bhaktas**) to conclude the discussion on bhakti that is accompanied by describing the various Bhakta lakshanas, characteristics of a Devotee in the 12th Chapter.

HE described Arjuna as **Pāṇḍava**, the son of Pandu, declaring that he who **mat-karma-kṛt**, worked for HIS sake (where works for Me: work for Me is **mat-karma**; one who does it is **mat-karma-kṛt**) who accepted HIM as the supreme Goal (**mat-paramaḥ**); he who is (**mat-bhaktaḥ**), devoted to HIM: He adored HIM alone in all ways, with his whole being and full enthusiasm. Thus, he is **madbhaktaḥ**.

He who was **Saṅga-varjitaḥ** means 'devoid of attachment to the results and free from poor association'; who is devoid of attachment for wealth, sons, friends, wife and relatives; where, *Sanga* means fondness, love; *varjitaḥ* is devoid of them. The one who is **Nirvairah**, who is free from enmity; **sarva-bhutesu**, towards all beings; bereft of the idea of enmity even towards those engaged in doing utmost harm to him; such a devotee shall attain HIM. For, HE alone is his supreme Goal; he does not attain any other goal.

This is the essence of the whole teaching of the Gītā. He who practices this teaching will attain Supreme Bliss and Immortality. This verse contains the summary of the entire philosophy of the Gītā, whereby, **He who performs actions (duties) for the sake of the Paramātmā. The one who consecrates all his actions to HIM, who Served HIM with all his heart, attains HIM.**

One is reminded of the verses here from the **Śiva Manas Puja** where the devotee wishes thus,

आत्मा त्वं गिरिजा मतिः सहचराः प्राणाः शरीरं गृहम्  
पूजा ते विषयोपभोगरचना निद्रा समाधिस्थितिः।  
संचारः पदयोः प्रदक्षिणविधिः स्तोत्राणि सर्वा गिरो  
यद्यत् कर्म करोमि तत्तदखिलं शम्भो तवाराधनम् ॥

"O Bhagavān, You are my **Ātman** (Self), **Devi Girija** (the Divine Mother) is my **Buddhi** (Pure Intellect), the **Śiva Ganas** (the Companions or Attendants) are my **Prāṇa** and my Body is Your Temple, My Interactions with the World are Your Worship and my Sleep is the State of **Samādhi** (complete absorption in You), My Feet Walking about is Your **Pradakshina** (Circumambulation); all my Speech are Your Hymns of Praises, Whatever work I do, all that is Your **Aradhana** (Worship), O Shambhu."

Thus, the one who regards HIM as his supreme goal, who lives for HIM alone, who works for HIM alone, who sees the Parameśvara in everything! The Devotee who sees the whole world as the Cosmic Form of the Paramātmā and therefore, cherishes no feeling of hatred or enmity towards any creature even when great injury has been done by others to him, who has no attachment or love to wealth, children, wife, friends and relatives and who seeks nothing else but the Supreme. He certainly realises HIM and enters into HIS Being. He becomes one with HIM.

There is a beautiful Bhajan that one dedicates to HIM at this time,

कर प्रणाम तेरे चरणों में, करता हूँ अब तेरे काज,  
पालन करने को आज्ञा तेरी, नियुक्त होता हूँ मैं आज,

अन्तर में स्थित रहकर मेरे, बागडोर पकड़े रहना,  
निपट निरंकुश चंचल मन को, सावधान करते रहना,

अन्तर्यामी को अन्त स्थित देख, सशंकित होवे मन,  
पाप वासना उठते ही हो, नाश लाज से वह जलभुन,

जीवों का कलरव जो, दिनभर सुनने में मेरे आवे,  
तेरा ही गुणगान जान, मन प्रमुदित हो अति सुख पावे,

तू ही है सर्वत्र व्याप्त हरि, तुझमें सारा यह संसार,  
इसी भावना से अंतर भर, मिलूँ सभी से तुझे निहार,

प्रतिपल निज इन्द्रिय समूह से, जो कुछ भी आचार करूँ,  
केवल तुझे रिझाने को बस, तेरा ही व्यवहार करूँ,

कर प्रणाम तेरे चरणों में, करता हूँ अब तेरे काज,  
पालन करने को आज्ञा तेरी, नियुक्त होता हूँ मैं आज।

This beautiful Bhajan set by Hanuman Prasad Poddar ji showcases the feeling of a devotee who has declared that all his actions from henceforth, shall be as an order from HIM in HIS service; he asks HIM to remain situated in his Self, taking the reigns of his fluctuating mind; such should be his state, that knowing HIM to be situated within himself, he is able to vanquish any desires or desire for wrong actions; That he should be so engrossed in HIM, that even in the chatter of all beings, he only hears HIS praise, that fills him with joy! Knowing HIM to be the all-pervading Śrī Hari, knowing HIM to contain the material and immaterial world, may he keep this mind when encountering any other; May all his senses function only to please HIM, May all HIS actions arisen from them please HIM. He declares to surrender himself to HIM, taking all his actions as orders from HIM.

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious BhagavadGītā, which is the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna, ends the eleventh discourse entitled: The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form.

We conclude this chapter with the Dhyāna of HIS Supreme Cosmic form...

**Om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu  
brahmavidyāyāṃ(m) yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṃvāde  
viśvarūpadarśanayogonāma ekādaśo'dhyāyaḥ**

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the eleventh chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Vision of the Universal Form."



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You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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