

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 11: Viśvarūpa-Darśana-Yoga

2/5 (Ślōka 13-28), Sunday, 28 September 2025

Interpreter: GĪTĀ VIŚĀRAD ŚRĪ DR. ASHU GOYAL JI

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/FRSBlllykp10>

Arjuna's Astonishment Before the Viśvarūpa: The All-Encompassing Cosmic Vision of Bhagavān Śrī Krishna, Radiant Splendor Beyond Measure, and the Terrifying Sight of Time Devouring All Beings

The name of **Chapter 11** of the **Bhagavad Gītā** is **Viśvarūpa Darśana Yoga - The Yoga of the Vision of the Universal Form.**

The session commenced with deep prajwalan, the customary lighting of the lamp, prayers to the Supreme, and salutations to all the Gurus.

**Vasudeva Sutam Devam, Kansa Chāṇūra Mardanam,
Devakī Parama Ānandam, Kṛṣṇam Vande Jagadgurum.**

**Yogeśam Saccidānandam, Vāsudeva Rājapriyam,
Dharma Saṁsthāpakam Vīram, Kṛṣṇo Vande Jagadgurum.**

Śrī Guru Caraṇa Kamalabhyo Namaḥ.

By the supremely auspicious grace of Bhagavān, such a rare fortune has awakened in the lives of the seekers. This human birth, which otherwise remains fleeting and uncertain, has been turned towards a path of true fulfillment—towards reaching its highest goal, attaining welfare not only in this world but also in the world beyond.

Moved by this divine grace, hearts have found delight in the study of the **Bhagavad Gītā**. Some have begun learning its recitation; some are committing it to memory; others are attempting to etch it deep into the heart. Many strive to understand its meaning through listening to discourses and engaging in self-study, while some, taking its timeless sutras, are sincerely attempting to live them in daily life.

Who can say what past *puṇya karmas* have borne such fruit? Perhaps it is the result of meritorious deeds of previous births, or the blessings of virtuous ancestors, that this blessed moment has dawned where one has been chosen to take refuge in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

The great Ācāryas and Mahāpuruṣas have again and again declared that for the welfare of humankind, there is no scripture more accessible, more elevating, and more transformative than the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

On this sixth day of Navarātri, while contemplating the eleventh adhyāya of the Gītā, merely the thought of it brings an indescribable thrill. Every pore quivers with delight just in the imagination of that scene. What then must have been the state of Arjuna, who beheld the vision directly? What must have been the state of Sañjaya, who narrated it? For us, who merely read or listen to the description, the heart trembles with awe. But what of Arjuna, who stood face to face with that cosmic form?

Bhagavān Himself had declared that such a vision cannot be attained through the Vedas, through yajña, through dāna, or through any karma. Never before had anyone seen it, nor will anyone see it again in the future.

Up to the twelfth śloka, Sañjaya begins to describe what unfolded before Arjuna's eyes. Until Arjuna was capable of speech, how could his inner state be expressed? Vyāsa, in order to preserve the authenticity of the Gītā, chose to present the scene through the words of Sañjaya, who narrated it to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. This is why the Gītā stands with such unmatched authority and prāmāṇikatā. Otherwise, how could Vyāsa have directly written what only Arjuna beheld? Such careful authenticity itself gives profound joy upon reflection.

The twelfth śloka speaks of a dazzling sight:

***divi sūrya-sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā
yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād bhāsas tasya mahātmanaḥ***

Sañjaya says: if a thousand suns were to rise together in the sky, perhaps their brilliance could be compared to a mere fraction of the effulgence of that supreme vision.

Even a single sun, when seen directly at midday, overwhelms the eyes with pain; one cannot look at it steadily. What then would it mean if a thousand suns were to rise at once? Such is the limit of Sañjaya's description: even the light of a thousand suns falls short in comparison.

Interestingly, when Oppenheimer witnessed the first atomic explosion, he too recalled this very śloka, likening the blinding flash to *divi sūrya-sahasrasya*. And yet, the radiance of that cosmic form far surpassed any earthly comparison.

Thus, through Sañjaya's words, the Gītā reveals to us Arjuna's extraordinary vision, a vision beyond imagination, beyond ritual, beyond human effort—a direct revelation of Bhagavān's viśvarūpa.

11.13

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

Then Arjuna, saw unfolded in that Supreme Deity, the whole universe with its many divisions concentrated at one place.

In that divine vision, Pāṇḍava Arjuna beheld the entire universe condensed into a single form. All the worlds, all beings, all celestial domains, the sages, ṛṣis, and devas—every realm and every species appeared distinctly, yet united, within the body of *deva-devasya*, Bhagavān Himself.

It was as though the countless *yoni-s*—the 8.4 million forms of existence—and the fourteen *bhuvanas* were unfolding before his very eyes. That which he thought of instantly appeared in front of him. Such was the wondrous vision.

The most striking word here is **ekastham**—all that exists, contained in one single place, one single form of Bhagavān. To perceive the *viśvarūpa* with ordinary eyes was impossible; therefore, Bhagavān bestowed upon Arjuna *divya cakṣuḥ*, divine vision. Yet, even with heavenly vision, how could one behold a form without beginning and without end, infinite in magnitude?

Normally, to see something vast, one must turn upward, downward, right, or left. But here, no such turning was required. Every direction, every expanse, every realm was gathered into that one form. The scriptures describe that within each pore of Bhagavān's body, countless universes reside.

As Vedānta declares:

yathā piṇḍe tathā brahmāṇḍe

As is the atom, so is the universe.

Every particle holds the wholeness of creation. Modern science, too, through quantum physics, has come close to this ancient truth. It tells us that each particle has its reflection, its counterpart elsewhere, and that the actions of one are mirrored by the other—limitless, boundless, and infinite.

Thus, when it is said that Arjuna saw the world ***ekastham apaśyat***, it is no longer so difficult to imagine. In earlier times, perhaps it was harder to explain. But today, one may understand it through a simple analogy. Just as on a mobile screen, one can use the zoom feature: with two fingers, the image enlarges, becoming greater and greater according to the resolution. Arjuna, too, was perceiving in this way. Focusing on Bhagavān, what he wished to see expanded before him, infinitely magnified, showing every realm and being. He did not need to turn his head; remaining fixed in one place, he beheld all creation contained in that one cosmic form—***ekastham apaśyat***.

This is a profound and wondrous truth—that the infinite universes were beheld in one single vision of Bhagavān.

11.14

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

Then Dhananjaya, struck with wonder and his hair standing on end, bowed before the divine Lord, and with joined palms, addressed Him, thus.

Overcome entirely with wonder, Dhanañjaya was seized by *vismaya*. Not merely surprised, but enveloped wholly in astonishment, so that nothing remained except wonder itself. His body thrilled with ecstasy, his hair stood on end, and with deep reverence, he bowed his head before Bhagavān.

With hands joined in *añjali*, placing his forehead upon them, he offered *praṇāma* in utmost devotion. Only then, with a trembling heart overflowing with awe, did Arjuna begin to speak.

Until this moment, Sañjaya had been describing what Arjuna beheld. But now, Arjuna himself found words, though his very being was still overwhelmed. Imagine—if the mere hearing or reading of this scene fills the listener with awe, what must have been the state of Arjuna, standing directly before that cosmic vision, beholding that which no one had ever seen nor imagined?

Thus, trembling, thrilled, and devoted, Arjuna bowed with folded hands, ready to voice the first words of his astonished prayer.

11.15

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

Arjuna said: O Lord, I see within Your body all the gods and multitude of different beings; observe Brahmā seated on His lotus-seat, Siva and all the sages and celestial serpents.

Arjuna spoke: *“O Deva! Within Your cosmic body, I behold all the devas, together with multitudes of beings of every kind. I see Brahmā, seated upon the lotus; I see Maheśa; I behold the ṛṣis in their fullness and the radiant serpents, the uragas, resplendent in their majesty.”*

In that moment, Arjuna had darśana of all divine realms within Bhagavān’s body—Devaloka, Brahmāloka, Vaikuṅṭha, and Kailāsa. Whatever arose in his mind to see was instantly revealed before his divine sight. Even Brahmā Himself appeared before him—Brahmā, the principle of creation.

This vision carried a deeper reflection: in daily life, too, every human assumes the role of Brahmā. How often does one think, *“This was created because of me. This happened only through my effort.”* Such self-assertion is nothing but the play of Brahmā within. Not only Brahmā, at times one even becomes Viṣṇu, declaring, *“I provide for my family; I run a factory; I sustain a large institution. I am the one who preserves.”* In this way, man becomes both Brahmā and Viṣṇu in his imagination.

But Śiva—rarely does one take that role. No one says, *“This was destroyed because of me.”* People will readily say, *“I created this, I nurtured this.”* But they will never say, *“I ended this.”* Creation and preservation are easily claimed; destruction never is. This subtle truth reflects itself in Vedāntic thought.

There are three kinds of ākāśa: **ghaṭākāśa**, the space within a pot; **maṭhākāśa**, the space within a building; and **mahākāśa**, the vast expanse outside. Yet beyond these is another profound dimension—**cittākāśa**, the limitless space of consciousness. Even though outer space itself is infinite, the mind and its imagination soar beyond, creating worlds without boundaries.

To illustrate: a friend once asked another, *“How is your factory running?”* The other replied, *“That factory is closed; nowadays I manage a different one.”* Curious, the first asked, *“Which factory?”* He replied, *“My wife’s factory.”* Amused, the first said, *“But your wife has no factory!”* The man answered, *“Indeed, she does—the factory of sorrows. Day and night, I am occupied managing it. One sorrow arises, I try to resolve it; another sorrow arises, I rush to attend to it. It is endless!”* Such is the vastness of cittākāśa—the imagination and concerns of the mind.

In this same way, Arjuna beheld within Bhagavān not only Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa, but also all

devas, ṛṣis, uragas, and the countless communities of beings—some of which he had never even conceived before. Those realms and forms which had never entered his imagination also became manifest in this cosmic revelation.

Thus, through the vision of viśvarūpa, Arjuna perceived the totality of creation—both known and unknown—contained within the boundless form of Bhagavān.

11.16

**anekabāhūdaraVāktranetraṃ(m),
paśyāmi tvāṃ(m) sarvato'nantarūpam,
nāntaṃ(n) na madhyaṃ(n) na punastavādiṃ(m),
paśyāmi viśveśvara viśvarūpa. 11.16**

O Lord of all universe, I behold You, endless to forms on all sides, with numerous arms, bellies, faces, and eyes. O Universal Form (Viśvarūpa), I see, neither Your beginning nor middle nor end.

The Vision of Viśvarūpa: Arjuna's Address to Bhagavān as Viśveśvara

At this point in the dialogue, Arjuna's heart and speech take on a new mode of reverence. As he beholds the cosmic form revealed by Bhagavān, his mind naturally turns to a fresh address: "O Viśveśvara!", the Lord of the entire universe. Arjuna exclaims that now it is beyond doubt: Bhagavān is indeed the supreme master of all that exists.

He declares: *"Whatever I can imagine, all that belongs to You; all are governed by You. Therefore, O Viśveśvara, O sovereign of the whole world, I bow before You."*

Arjuna begins to describe what he beholds:

- Bhagavān is seen with innumerable arms (aneka-bāhu),
- countless bellies (aneka-udara),
- multiple mouths and faces (vaktreṣu),
- and innumerable eyes (aneka-netram).

This vision is sarvataḥ-ananta-rūpam, endless in every direction, pervading the whole cosmos.

Arjuna finds himself in a dilemma. Though gifted with divya-dṛṣṭi, enabling him to see across vast distances—miles beyond mortal sight, yet he cannot trace the limits. Whichever direction he turns, right or left, above or below, the rūpa stretches endlessly. He cannot determine a starting point, nor a final point; thus, the very idea of a center eludes him. Standing before the infinite, he does not know whether he is near the feet or at the crown.

He turns his head in every direction, right, left, upwards, downwards, striving to find the extent of the form. But in all ten directions, the vision continues endlessly.

Arjuna admits his bewilderment: *"I cannot discern the end of Your form. If the end is unseen, then where is the beginning? And if neither end nor beginning can be located, how can the middle ever be known? Thus, I see neither the beginning (ādi), nor the middle (madhya), nor the end (anta) of Your infinite form, O Ananta-rūpa!"*

This experience of the viśvarūpa, though revealed vividly in the Mahābhārata, finds resonance in the Rāmcaritmānas as well, though very few notice the parallel. In the bālakāṇḍa, after Śrī Rāma's birth, Kaushalyā once bathed the child, adorned Him lovingly, and placed Him in the cradle. Thereafter, she

performed her daily pūjā.

Mother Kauśalyā's Vision of the Infinite Form

The Ramcharita Mānas says:

एक बार जानी अहवै करी सिंगारा पलानाम पाउरहा
नजा कुला इश्टा-देवा भगवाना पूजा हेतु किन्हा अस्नाना

Once, Mother Kauśalyā bathed the infant Śrī Rāma, adorned Him, and laid Him in the cradle. Then, after bathing herself, she prepared to worship the family deity and sat in the shrine for her daily worship.

करि पूजा नेबैद्य चढावा। आपु गई जहँ पाक बनावा।।
बहुरि मातु तहवाँ चली आई। भोजन करत देख सुत जाई।।

kari pūjā nebaidya chaṛhāvā āpu gai jahāṁ pāka banāvā
bahuri mātu tahavāṁ calī āi bhojana karata dekha suta jāi

She performed the worship and placed naivedya (food offering) before the deity. Out of concern, she went to the kitchen to see what other preparations were being made for Bhagavān. When she returned, she was stunned—there was her infant son Rāma, who could not even turn in the cradle by Himself, seated in the shrine and eating the naivedya!

गै जननी सिसु पहिँ भयभीता।
देखा बाल तहाँ पुनि सूता।

gai jananī sisu pahim bhayabhītā
dekha bāl tahāṁ puni sūtā

Kauśalyā was shaken. “How is this possible? Who could have brought Him here? There is no one else around.” Frightened, she rushed back to the cradle.

To her astonishment, she saw the child Rāma lying there asleep in the cradle exactly as before.

बहुरि आई देखा सुख सोई। हृदयँ कंप मन धीर न होई।।

bahuri āi dekhā sukha soī hṛdayaṁ kampa mana dhīra na hoī

She hurried back to the shrine and again found Him sitting there, eating the offering. Seeing the same child in two places at once, her heart trembled, and her mind lost all steadiness.

इहाँ उहाँ दुइ बालक देखा। मति भ्रम मोर कि आन बिसेषा।।

ihāṁ uhāṁ dui bālaka dekhā mati bhrama mora ki āna bisekhā

She thought, “Here is Rāma, and there is Rāma, has my intellect become deluded? How can one child appear in two places at once?”

देखि राम जननी अकुलानी। प्रभु हँसि दीन्ह मधुर मुसुकानी।।

dekhi rāma jananī akulānī prabhu hamsi dīnh madhura musukānī

When Śrī Rāma saw His mother so agitated, He smiled gently.

देखरावा मातहि निज अद्भुत रूप अखंड।

रोम रोम प्रति लागे कोटि-कोटि ब्रह्मंड।।

dekharāvā mātahi nija adbhuta rūpa akhaṇḍa

roma roma prati lāge koṭi-koṭi brahmaṇḍa

Then, He revealed His wondrous, infinite form to her. From the one, He became two; and from the two, He expanded into the infinite cosmic form. In every pore of His divine body, countless universes were visible.

अगनित रवि ससि सिव चतुरानन। बहु गिरि सरित सिंधु महि कानन।।

काल कर्म गुण ग्यान सुभाऊ। सोउ देखा जो सुना न काऊ।।

aganita ravi sasi siva caturānana □ bahu giri sarita sindhu mahi kānana □

kāla karma guṇa jñāna subhāu □ sou dekha jo sunā na kāu □

Kauśalyā beheld countless suns, moons, Śivas, Brahmās, innumerable mountains, rivers, oceans, forests, and substances never seen or heard of before. Time, karma, guṇas, knowledge, and all aspects of existence stood revealed in His form.

देखी माया सब बिधि गाढ़ी। अति सभित जेरें कर ठाढ़ी।।

देखा जीव नचावइ जाही। देखी भगति जो छोरइ ताही।।

dekhi māyā saba bidhi gāṛhī □ ati sabhīta jore kara ṭhāṛhī □

dekha jīva nacāvai jāhī □ dekhi bhagati jo chori tāhī □

She saw Māyā itself, dense and unfathomable, standing fearfully before Bhagavān with folded hands. She saw the jīva being made to dance under the power of Māyā, and she saw Bhakti, the one force that liberates the jīva from Māyā's grip.

तनु पुलकित मन बचन न आवा। नयन मूदि चरननि सिरु नावा।।

बिसमयवंत देखि महतारी। भये बहुरि सिसुरूप खरारी।।

tanu pulakita mana bacana na āvā □ nayana mūdi caraṇani siru nāvā □

bisamayavaṁta dekhi mahatārī □ bhaye bahuri sisurūpa kharārī □

Kauśalyā's body thrilled with wonder, but words would not come. Overwhelmed, she closed her eyes and bowed her head at the feet of Śrī Rāma. Seeing His mother bewildered and trembling, Bhagavān once again assumed His tender child-form.

अस्तुति करि न जाइ भय माना। जगत पिता मैं सुत करि जाना।।

astuti kari na jāi bhaya mānā □ jagata pitā mai suta kari jānā □

She thought, "How can I praise Him? I have taken the Father of the Universe as my son!"

Śrī Rāma then consoled her and said: "What you have seen, Mother, must not be spoken of to anyone. This is a secret of My līlā."

हरि जननी बहुबिधि समुझाई। यह जनि कतहुँ कहसि सुनु माई।।

hari janani bahubidhi samujhāī □ yah jani katahūṁ kahasi sunu māī □

Thus, He reassured her: "Do not reveal this to anyone, for it will disturb the unfolding of My divine play."

Kaushalyā was thus silenced, her lips sealed by Bhagavān's will.

The viśvarūpa that appeared before Arjuna and before Kaushalyā both reflected the same truth—an infinite rūpa that transcends limitations. Just as from an ink bottle infinite words and shapes may emerge, or from a lump of gold countless ornaments be crafted, so too in that ananta-rūpa lies every conceivable form, every nāma, every rūpa.

Whatever Arjuna had once imagined now reflected before him, just as the infinite potentials manifest from the ink stroke or from molten gold. The viśvarūpa is not confined—it is the boundless canvas itself, where all imagination, form, and creation flow endlessly.

**kiriṭinaṃ(ñ) gadināṃ(ñ) cakriṇāṃ(ñ) ca,
tejorāśiṃ(m) sarvato dīptimantam,
paśyāmi tvāṃ(n) durnirīkṣyaṃ(m) śamantād-
dīptānalārkaḍyutimaprameyam. 11.17**

I see You, wearing a diadem, holding a mace and discus, a mass of effulgence, shining around having a brilliance like the blazing fire and sun, dazzling and boundless on all sides.

He beholds Bhagavān crowned with a *kiriṭa*, holding the *gadā* and the *cakra*, effulgent with brilliance. From every side comes forth the blaze of radiance, a vast *tejaḥ* likened to the brilliance of countless fires and suns. Yet the sight is *durnirīkṣya*—difficult to behold. His eyes long to linger on that vision, to drink it fully, yet the immense blaze forces them shut. What is revealed is *aprameya*—beyond all comparison, without resemblance to anything previously seen, immeasurable in nature.

That vision also reflects the imagery of the caturbhūja rūpa, for within Arjuna's mind existed the image of Nārāyaṇa with crown, mace, and discus. Just as ink has within it the potential of endless shapes, whatever Arjuna had once conceived within his imagination, the ananta-rūpa manifested accordingly. Thus, he beheld the vision of Viṣṇu within the infinite. And yet, he describes it as *aprameya*—that which no *pramāṇa* can comprehend.

The word *aprameya* leads toward the philosophy of *pramāṇas*, the means of acquiring valid knowledge, extensively preserved in the Indian darśana tradition. Within the Sanātana fold, nine darśanas were affirmed: six āstika systems and three nāstika ones. Here, āstika does not mean merely theism, nor nāstika atheism, but rather whether a darśana accepts the authority of the Veda.

Thus, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, and Uttara Mīmāṃsā are the six āstika systems. Jain, Bauddha, and Cārvāka are the three nāstikas, for they did not accept the Veda. Yet, even Cārvāka was given the dignity of being called a mahārṣi, for though extreme in view, he was a thinker of sharp brilliance.

Mahārṣi Cārvāka held: "**pratyakṣam eva pramāṇam**"—that which is directly perceived alone is valid. His doctrine may be expressed as: *if I cannot see it, I will not believe it*. Yet the ācāryas of the tradition found this incomplete. They illustrated with examples: a burning incense stick, when moved in circles, appears to form a red ring of fire. But that ring does not exist. Similarly, a pencil placed in water appears bent, though it remains straight. Perception can mislead. Thus, *pratyakṣa* alone cannot be final proof.

Hence, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika added *anumāna*, reasoning or inference, as a second *pramāṇa*. But *anumāna* does not merely mean guessing; its root is in *anugamana*—following the trace of knowledge. There are two kinds: *pūrvavat-anumāna* (from cause to effect) and *śeṣavat-anumāna* (from effect to cause). Dark clouds signify: "*it will rain*"—this is *pūrvavat*. Awakening to find the roads wet and rooftops damp, one infers: "*it must have rained at night*"—this is *śeṣavat*.

But even perception and inference remain limited to what is visible within one's lifetime. What of events of centuries or millennia past, unseen by present eyes? Here arises another *pramāṇa*: *āgama* or *śabda*, the testimony of śāstra and mahāpuruṣas. These are to be accepted as authoritative, for they preserve what lies beyond perception.

Thus, beyond *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, and *āgama*, later thinkers added three more, making a total of six *pramāṇas*. These are:

- **Pratyakṣa** — direct perception.
- **Anumāna** — inference.
- **Śabda / Āgama** — scriptural testimony and words of mahāpuruṣas.
- **Upamāna** — knowledge by comparison; for instance, observing lush greenery and concluding the land is fertile, or identifying a student as studious upon seeing his success.
- **Arthāpatti** — presumption based on circumstances; reading of a nīlagaī in texts, then later encountering a blue-colored bovine and realizing, “this must be the nīlagaī described.” Or seeing a building with four towers in Hyderabad and recognizing it as the famed Cārminār known from scripture.
- **Anupalabdhi / Abhāva** — proof by absence; noticing many mice in a house, one infers the absence of a cat there.

These six pramāṇas, together, encompass the Indian schools’ means of knowledge.

And yet, Arjuna’s description reminds us that not even one of these six can measure or establish what is seen. That vision of Bhagavān is *aprameya*—inaffirmable through pratyakṣa, beyond anumāna, ungraspable by śabda, impervious to upamāna, unapproachable through arthāpatti, unreachable by abhāva.

For what is beyond māyā, what transcends the reach of indriyas, manas, and buddhi, cannot be bound within pramāṇas:

गोचर जहाँ लग मन जाई।

सो सब माया जानो भाई॥

“*gochar jahā lag mana jāī*”

so sab māyā jāno bhāī”

Where the senses and the mind can travel, it all remains within the realm of māyā. Bhagavān stands beyond, subduing that māyā. Therefore, the rūpa that Arjuna beheld could only be described as *aprameya*—immeasurable, incomparable, unmatched.

11.18

**tvamakṣaram(m) paRāmaṃ(m) veditavyam(n),
tvamasya viśvasya param(n) nidhānam,
tvamavyayaḥ(ś) śāśvatadharmagoptā,
sanātanastvam(m) puruṣo mato me. 11.18**

You are I recognise, the Imperishable, the Supreme Being (Akṣara) to be realized; You are the ultimate refuge of this universe; the protector of eternal Dharma (duty and righteousness) and You are the eternally imperishable Being.

In this utterance, Arjuna recognizes, with sudden clarity, the Absolute before him. He addresses Bhagavān as **akṣaram param**—the imperishable, the supreme Reality to be known; as **para nidhānam**, the ultimate refuge of the entire cosmos. He sees Bhagavān as **avyaya**—undecaying, the eternal guardian of *śāśvata-dharma*—the everlasting law; indeed, **sanātanah puruṣah**—the timeless Person, the Eternal One—this is how Bhagavān now appears “**mato me**” (in his judgement). What earlier had been taught and intuited now becomes unmistakably real to the seer: these attributes are not abstract doctrines but direct perception.

11.19

**Anādimadhyāntamanantavīryam,
anantabāhuṃ(m) śaśisūryanetram,
paśyāmi tvāṃ(n) dīptahutāśaVāktraṃ,
svatejasā viśvamidaṃ(n) tapantam. 11.19**

I see You, without beginning, middle or end, infinite in power, of infinite arms, the sun and the moon being Your eyes, the blazing fire Your mouth; warming the universe, with Your radiance.

Here the vision deepens: Bhagavān is beheld as without beginning, without middle, without end—**anādi-madhyānta**—possessing immeasurable vigour. Infinite arms, countless extensions, eyes like the moon and the sun—such images crowd the seer's sight. The face glows as if with kindled fire (**dīpta-huta-āśa-vāktra**), and by that self-radiance the whole world is seen to be scorched, as if the cosmos itself is alight from Bhagavān's inner blaze (**svatejasā viśvam idaṃ tapantam**).

In the sixteenth verse, Arjuna refers to Śrī Bhagavān as anādi (without beginning), where the word anādi is used in the sense of the form or ākāra-bhāva.

na antaṃ na madhyaṃ na punaḥ tavādiṃ

"Neither the end, nor the middle, nor the beginning of Your form can I perceive."

Here, the terms anādi (no beginning), na madhya (no middle), and na anta (no end) are used in a temporal sense, referring to time.

A subtle distinction arises here: the word *anādi* appears elsewhere with a slightly different emphasis. In some passages, it points to immeasurable spatial extent (the formless vastness of the form); in this context it emphatically marks transcendence of time—no ādī (beginning), no anta (end), no madhya (middle). Bhagavān's presence exceeds both spatial and temporal metrics: neither chronology nor geometry can confine that Being.

A beautiful song by Bhakt Prahlad:

मैं कहता डंके की चोट पर
अपना हरि है हजार हाथ वाला
ओ दीन दयाला

11.20

**dyāvapṛthivyoridamantaram(m) hi,
vyāptaṃ(n) tvayaikena diśāśca sarvāḥ,
dr̥ṣṭvādbhutaṃ(m) rūpamugraṃ(n) tavedaṃ(m),
lokatrayaṃ(m) pravyathitaṃ(m) mahātman. 11.20**

The space between the heaven and earth and all the spheres is pervaded by you, alone. Seeing this marvellous and frightening form of Yours, O Great-Soul, the three worlds feel greatly alarmed.

Arjuna beholds that the very expanse between heaven and earth—indeed all directions—is pervaded by Bhagavān alone; every *diśa* is filled by that single Presence. The sight is both wondrous and terrible (*rūpa-ugra*): on beholding it, the three worlds tremble. The seer perceives creation, dissolution, and the endless churn of cosmic processes—countless universes arising and dissolving, myriad bodies and spheres in continuous flux.

Because Arjuna's mind is in the mood of the warrior—war's ferocity and urgency present, he

perceives primarily the awe-inspiring, dreadful aspect of the viśvarūpa: the kāla-faced, all-destroying power implicit in the cosmos. What he sees is not a tranquil panorama but the dramatic play of birth, decay, and dissolution—an unsettling revelation of the world’s cyclic becoming and unbecoming within Bhagavān’s all-embracing form.

11.21

**amī hi tvāṃ(m) surasaṅghā viśanti,
kecidbhītāḥ(ph) prāñjalayo gṛṇanti,
svastīyuktvā maharṣisiddhasaṅghāḥ(s),
stuvanti tvāṃ(m) stutibhiḥ(ph) puṣkalābhiḥ. 11.21**

Those multitudes of gods merge in You; some in awe with folded hands are chanting Your names and glories; bands of great sages and Siddhas (emancipated souls) cry "Hail Highest Majesty", and shower praises on You with excellent hymns.

Arjuna beholds the devas themselves entering into Bhagavān’s infinite form. Some approach with deep fear, hands folded in reverence, chanting His names and qualities. Others—mahārṣis and siddhas—pronounce words of blessing, “svasti, svasti,” and glorify Him with abundant hymns. Yet in Arjuna’s vision, even these celestial beings appear shaken, their reverence tinged with awe and trembling.

The vision reflects a profound truth: as is one’s *dṛṣṭi*, so appears the *śṛṣṭi*. A single woman in a forest is seen by her son as mother, by her husband as wife, but by a prowling lion as prey. The woman is the same; the perceptions differ. So too, Arjuna’s anxious vision colours what he sees—even the devas appear terrified.

It is the lens of the seer that shapes the seen. When one remembers Bhagavān with devotion, the world itself becomes sanctified. The ancient invocation recited during rituals captures this:

ॐ अपवित्रः पवित्रो वा सर्वावस्थां गतोऽपि वा ।

यः स्मरेत्पुण्डरीकाक्षं स बाह्याभ्यन्तरः शुचिः ॥

**“om apavitraḥ pavitro vā sarvāvasthāṃ gato’pi vā,
yaḥ smaret puṇḍarīkākṣaṃ sa bāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ.”**

Whether pure or impure, in whatever state one may be, the remembrance of Bhagavān Puṇḍarīkākṣa sanctifies within and without. Thus, Arjuna’s fearful remembrance makes even the devas appear fearful.

Arjuna, being overwhelmed with awe and trepidation, appears visibly startled. Due to his state of astonishment, even the assembly of great ṛṣis and siddhas gathered there, as well as the community of deities, seem to share in that fear and astonishment.

11.22

**rudrādityā vasavo ye ca sādhyā,
viśveśvinau marutaścoṣmapāśca,
gandharvayakṣāsurasiddhasaṅghā,**

vīkṣante tvāṃ(m) vismitāścaiva sarve. 11.22

The (eleven) Rudras, (twelve) Adityas, (eight) Vasus, (twelve) Sādhyas, (ten) Viśvedevas, (two) Aśvinikumāras, (forty-nine) Maruts, manes, hosts of Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras and Siddhas—they all, gaze at You, in amazement.

Arjuna further perceives: the eleven Rudras, the twelve Ādityas, the eight Vasus, the Viśvedevas, the twin Aśvins, the Maruts, the Piṭṛs, the Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras, and hosts of Siddhas—all gaze upon Bhagavān’s universal form in utter astonishment.

Here, too, their mood mirrors Arjuna’s own. When Arjuna is overcome with wonder, they also appear wondrous. When fear grips him, their faces too seem fearful. For Bhagavān has no single fixed form; He is infinite, *ananta*. What the devotee projects upon Him—whether awe, fear, love, or tenderness—becomes reflected in His manifestation.

This is a subtle but profound teaching: Bhagavān is like an infinite canvas, or as earlier likened, an endless expanse of ink. Whatever form one wishes to draw upon it, that form emerges. To those who approach with *prema*, He reveals Himself as love; to those who approach with *vātsalya*, He becomes the very embodiment of tender affection. And to Arjuna, whose mind is still entangled in the mood of war, Bhagavān reveals His *ugra-rūpa*—the fierce, all-consuming form.

Thus, Arjuna continues to see the viśvarūpa unfold, mirroring the tides of his own inner vision, and with every passing moment, his heart grows more restless and overwhelmed.

11.23

rūpaṃ(m) mahatte bahuVāktranetraṃ(m), mahābāho bahubāhūrupādam, bahūdaraṃ(m) bahudaṃṣṭrākarālaṃ(n), dṛṣṭvā lokāḥ(ph) pravyathitāstathāham. 11.23

O mighty-armed, seeing Your immeasurable and frightening form with numerous mouths, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, bellies and fearful teeth, the worlds are terror-stricken, and so am I.

Having been granted the divine vision, Arjuna now beholds a sight that overwhelms his heart.

He exclaims: “O Mahābāhu! I behold Your immense form with countless mouths and eyes, many arms, thighs, and feet. Your vast belly and terrifying fangs make You appear dreadful. Seeing such a form, the worlds are trembling, and I too am shaken.”

Arjuna confesses that the vision of this *mahat rūpa* has deeply unsettled him. The many mouths and blazing teeth of Bhagavān appear dreadful, and his heart is no longer steady. He feels as though all beings around him are equally agitated. Yet, in truth, it is his own inner state being projected outward. Just as one who sits in a discourse hall — if filled with joy, feels that everyone else is joyous, and if restless, assumes that no one is attentive — in the same way, Arjuna’s disturbed mind sees disturbance in all.

जैसी दृष्टि वैसी सृष्टि

Jaisī dṛṣṭi vaisī sṛṣṭi.

Arjuna is experiencing a similar state. He beholds the terrifying form of Śrī Bhagavān, and as a result, it appears to him that everyone witnessing this immense form of Śrī Bhagavān is struck with awe and

fear. Arjuna himself is deeply agitated and overwhelmed.

11.24

**nabhaḥspr̥śaṃ(n) dīptamanekavarṇaṃ(m),
vyāttānaṃ(n) dīptaviśālanetram,
dṛṣṭvā hi tvāṃ(m) pravyathitāntarātmā,
dhṛtiṃ(n) na vindāmi śamaṃ(ñ) ca viṣṇo. 11.24**

When I see Your form, touching the sky, effulgent in many colours, with mouths wide open, with large shining eyes, my heart trembles with fear, I lose courage and find no peace, O Viṣṇu.

Again, he describes what he beholds: *“O Viṣṇo! I see Your form touching the very heavens, radiant with many colors, with gaping mouths and luminous, wide eyes. Gazing upon this sight, my very self trembles within. My mind finds no composure, no peace, no steadiness.”*

What Arjuna had expected to bring joy has, in fact, filled him with dread. He sees Bhagavān consuming all beings, devouring with His fiery eyes and dreadful teeth. Even the devas, siddhas, and ṛṣis, though in reality serene, now appear to Arjuna as if trembling, anxiously folding their hands in prayer, pleading for Bhagavān’s grace. Arjuna’s own fear paints this perception before him.

11.25

**daṃṣṭrākarālāni ca te mukhāni,
dṛṣṭvaiva kālānalasannibhāni,
diśo na jāne na labhe ca śarma
prasīda deveśa jagannivāsa. 11.25**

Seeing Your mouths, with fearful teeth, resembling the raging fires at the time of universal destruction, I know not, the cardinal directions, nor do I find peace. Therefore, be kind to me, O Lord of the gods and the shelter, of the universe.

With increasing agitation, he pleads further: *“Seeing Your mouths, fierce with terrifying fangs, blazing like the fire of destruction, I lose all sense of direction. I find no peace, no solace. O Deveśa, O Jagannivāsa, be gracious!”*

Arjuna admits openly that he is not at ease. Instead of delight, his heart is overtaken by fear. Bhagavān’s form appears to him not smiling, not gentle, but ablaze with wrath, with fiery eyes from which suns seem to rise, with mouths devouring all beings. His heart, overwhelmed, cries out for reprieve.

The truth, however, lies in his own inner projection. Bhagavān, who is infinite, assumes no single form. It is the lens of the devotee’s *bhāva* that shapes how the infinite manifests. When love is imposed upon Him, He appears as Prema-svarūpa. When maternal affection is projected, He manifests as Vātsalya-svarūpa. But when fear takes hold, He reflects it back as a form of terror.

Here, in the battlefield, Arjuna’s own trembling mind beholds Bhagavān in a dreadful form.

11.26

**amī ca tvāṃ(n) dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putrāḥ(s),
sarve sahaivāvanipālasaṅghaiḥ,
bhīṣmo droṇaḥ(s) sūtaputrastathāsau,
sahāsmadiyairapi yodhamukhyaiḥ. 11.26**

All the sons of Dhytarastra, with hosts of kings of the earth, Bhīṣma, Drona, Karna, with the chief warriors on our side as well,

Arjuna beholds and recognizes that all the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, together with countless kings of the earth, are entering into the blazing mouths of Bhagavān. It is not only those kings, but also Bhīṣma himself, Droṇa, the sūtaputra Karṇa, along with even the foremost warriors from Arjuna's own side—his very companions and allies on the battlefield—all entering into that terrifying vision.

11.27

**Vāktrāṇi te tvaramāṇā viśanti,
daṃṣṭrākarālāni bhayānakāni,
kecidvilagnā daśanāntareṣu,
sandṛśyante cūrṇitairuttamāṅgaiḥ. 11.27**

-- are rushing headlong into Your mouths with terrible teeth and fearful to look at. Some of these are seen sticking in the gaps between the teeth, with their heads crushed.

Arjuna sees all these warriors rushing swiftly into those fearsome mouths, dreadful with sharp and terrible teeth. Some of them, crushed between the great jaws, have their heads shattered and are visible, caught between Bhagavān's daṃṣṭras. The sight is dreadful: mighty kings and warriors being ground to pieces within that unfathomable form.

Here, the earlier words of Bhagavān resonate—when He declared in the beginning that Arjuna would see whatever he desired to see: *yacchasi draṣṭu micchasi paśya*. Arjuna is a warrior, his innermost thought fixed upon the destruction of enemies. Whatever he desired to see, the infinite form reflected to him, like a blank slate given along with ink. Arjuna drew with his imagination and saw it reflected back in the cosmic canvas. And yet, the very vision born of his own warrior's heart leaves him trembling in fear.

Kabīrdās expressed this eternal truth:

**झूठे सुख को सुख कहें, मानत हैं मन मोद । जगत चबैना काल का, कछ मुख में कछु गोद
“khalaka chabena kāla kā, kucha mukha mẽ kucha gōdī.
jhūṭhe sukh kō sukh kahe, mānata hai mana mōdī.”**

Who escapes? Every being sits either in the jaws of kāla or on its lap. Some are consumed instantly, others wait for their turn. The illusion of worldly pleasures deceives, yet none remain outside the grasp of time. The flowers in the garden speak, as if to each other:

**माली आवत देखि के, कलियाँ करै पुकार ।
फूली-फूली चुनि गई, कालि हमारी बार ॥
“māli avat dekh kaliya kare pukāra,
phūle phūle chuni liye, kaila hama khilibo bāra.”**

When the gardener comes, the buds sigh: “He has plucked the fully blossomed ones today; tomorrow when we bloom, we too shall be taken.”

Arjuna trembles at the sight: Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Karṇa, and so many warriors—his own as well—all consumed by kāla-rūpa, helpless before the universal law of death.

11.28

**yathā nadīnām(m) bahavo'mbuvegāḥ(s),
samudramevābhimukhā dravanti,
tathā tavāmī naralokavīrā,
viśanti Vāktrāṇyabhivijvalanti. 11.28**

As diverse torrents of rivers rush towards an ocean, so do these warriors of the mortal world, enter into Your blazing mouths,

Just as many rivers, flowing with their waters, rush directly toward the ocean, so too these warriors of the world, the nāra-loka-vīrāḥ, hasten into the flaming mouths of Bhagavān. The currents of fate are irresistible; their course is toward the consuming blaze of the infinite form.

Arjuna, naturally, is overwhelmed. To behold rivers of warriors entering those fiery jaws is terrifying. Within, he knows this is destiny—war will bring the death of Bhīṣma and Droṇa, whom he reveres; yet seeing it depicted so vividly in the viśvarūpa shakes him deeply. This is a battle, and his warrior-mind has brought him face to face with the ugra-kāla-rūpa—creation and destruction cycling ceaselessly within Bhagavān.

The vision granted to Arjuna is, in truth, that which he himself desired to see. The battlefield within him colored the reflection he beheld. Bhagavān's infinite form is like a cosmic mirror—whatever the devotee conceives, that emerges before the eyes. In Arjuna's heart, the thought of destruction is dominant, and the viśvarūpa responds, manifesting kāla in its most dreadful and inescapable form.

This wondrous and fearsome revelation of Bhagavān shall be continued further in the next discourse. A moment of nāma-saṅkīrtana—

'Hari śaraṇam, Hari śaraṇam, Hari śaraṇam...'

Yogeśvara Śrī Kṛṣṇa-candra Bhagavān kī Jaya

Question and Answers

RM Thakur Ji

Q: The discourse was so beautiful that we were completely absorbed, as if lost in a world of imagination. The example you gave from the Ramayana was particularly remarkable. We wanted to understand the incident with Yashoda and Kausalya Mata. As you mentioned, divine vision was granted to witness it. There are two examples — one with the mother and another with Manu Shatru performing tapasya. How were they able to see Bhagavān's form?

A: Divine vision is essential to behold Bhagavān's manifestation. If Bhagavān intends to show His form, He grants divine vision. Nothing is difficult for Bhagavān. Actions, rules, and restrictions are for human beings; for Bhagavān, no rule can bind. As mentioned previously, Param Shraddheya Brahmaleen Swami Ramdas Ji Maharaj was asked if one could see Bhagavān with ordinary eyes. He replied, "No, not normally. But if He wills, it is possible." Bhagavān is omnipotent, and nothing is impossible for Him.

Rajendra Ji

Q: The way you explain the Gita gives a wonderful feeling. We sense divine grace, not our own merit.

Even through a small mobile or TV, we can witness everything. Why can't we consider this divine vision?

A: One must indeed accept it as a divine vision. Even while reading, one's goosebumps rise. Imagine Arjuna standing there — the mind stops functioning as it is overwhelmed by the vision. Reading alone brings such a thrill; listening brings even greater. In this way, the experience is effortless and selfless (nishkāma). The grace of Swami Ji allows this experience.

Gopal Ji

Q1: Regarding the 16th verse of the 7th chapter — *jijñāsā* — can you clarify it?

A: Bhagavān mentions four types of devotees:

- 1. **Ār** - Those who remember Bhagavān only in distress and forget Him once the difficulty is over. They may recite prayers, Hanuman Chalisa, Geeta, or other rituals during hardship, but once resolved, they return to worldly affairs. Still, Bhagavān calls them His devotee.
- 2. **Arthārthī** - Those who approach Bhagavān with a transactional mindset: "If You grant my wish, I will perform worship or give offerings; otherwise not." Even so, Bhagavān considers them devotees.
- 3. **Jijñāsū** - Those who earnestly seek to know Bhagavān and understand their relationship with Him. Most of us belong to this category, aspiring to move beyond Ār and Arthārthī. The desire to learn the Gita arises because we are now **jijñāsū** devotees.
- 4. **Jñānī** - Those who have realized Bhagavān through deep understanding and experience. These devotees have transcended discussion and intellectual curiosity; they have truly grasped the essence.

Q2: In today's discourse, while showing Arjuna Bhagavān's **viśvarūpa**, were the teachings meant to impart knowledge or to reveal His māyā?

A: Bhagavān revealed it in response to Arjuna's request. Arjuna said, "I want to see it." Initially, he only heard about the **vibhūti** in audio form. Hearing was insufficient; he wanted a visual. Since Arjuna desired to see, Bhagavān granted it. This aligns with *nabhaḥ-sprśam dīptam* from the first line of verse 24, highlighting the overwhelming and radiant nature of His form. The divine vision was granted according to the devotee's sincere wish.



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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.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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