

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 11: Viśvarūpa-Darśana-Yoga

2/5 (Ślōka 16-25), Saturday, 27 September 2025

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YouTube Link: https://youtu.be/rh0Hv8_DGUU

Arjuna Beholds the Terrifying Cosmic Form of Bhagavān

Chapter 11 of the Srimad Bhagavad Gītā - Vishwaroopa Darshana - The Yog of revelation of the majestic cosmic form of the Supreme Divine

The discourse commenced with the auspicious lighting of the Dīpam at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān. The gentle radiance of the flame, accompanied by heartfelt prayers, filled the atmosphere with deep reverence and Bhakti, marking the beginning of a divine journey into the eternal wisdom of the Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā.

**Vāsudevasutaṁ Devaṁ, Kaṁsacāṇūramardanam
Devakīparamānandaṁ, Kṛṣṇaṁ Vande Jagadgurum**

We are studying Viśvarūpa Yoga, the 11th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā.
Last time, we covered up to verse 15,

arjuna uvācha

**paśhyāmi devāns tava deva dehe, sarvāns tathā bhūta-viśheṣha-saṅghān
brahmāṇam īśhaṁ kamalāsana-stham, ṛiṣhīnśh cha sarvān uragānśh cha divyān**

Where Arjuna began describing the magnificent universal form of Bhagavān, the Viśvarūpa. In verse 15, Arjuna started expressing his wonder at this divine vision of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the all-encompassing Supreme Divine of the universe.

Now, let us continue from verse 16, where Arjuna further describes what he beholds in this cosmic form.

11.16

**anekabāhūdaraVāktranetraṁ(m),
paśyāmi tvāṁ(m) sarvato'nantarūpam,**

nāntaṃ(n) na madhyaṃ(n) na punastavādim(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.

- **aneka-bāhu-udara-vaktra-netram** — the word *aneka* means many or countless; *bāhu* means arms; *udara* means stomachs or bellies; *vaktra* means faces; and *netra* means eyes.
- **Paśyāmi tvām** — “I see You.”
- **Sarvato'nanta-rūpam** — “On all sides, I see Your infinite forms.”
- **Nāntam na madhyam na punaḥ tavādim** — “I see no end, no middle, and no beginning in You.”
- **Paśyāmi viśveśvara viśvarūpa** — “I behold You as the Supreme Bhagavān of the universe, whose very form is the universe.”

Arjuna says:

“I see Your infinite forms in every direction, with countless arms, countless stomachs, countless faces, and countless eyes. O Bhagavān of the universe, O Viśveśvara, whose very form is the universe itself! You are both the Creator and the Creation. In You, I see no beginning, no middle, and no end.”

In Sanskrit, one of the sacred names of Bhagavān is Viṣṇu. The word Viṣṇu means “He who pervades everything”, **yo viśati sarvatra sa viṣṇuḥ**. He is present everywhere, in all beings and in all things.

As we know from the Viṣṇu Sahasranāma, Bhagavān Viṣṇu has a thousand names. It is one of the most beautiful and deeply soothing hymns in Sanskrit, each name reminding us of His all-embracing, all-pervading presence. It is chanted in many languages today, and those who have learned and practiced it have experienced its powerful spiritual effect.

The Incarnation of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa

When the suffering of Mother Earth became unbearable, she went to Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the embodiment of Love, and prayed to Him to incarnate in human form to restore Dharma and lead humanity back to the unity of divine love.

Moved by her prayer, Bhagavān Viṣṇu agreed and took birth as baby Kṛṣṇa.

As per tradition, His foster parents, Yaśodā and Nanda, invited the great sage Garga Ṛṣi for the Nāmakaraṇa Saṃskāra, the naming ceremony. Neither Yaśodā nor Nanda knew of Kṛṣṇa's true divine nature. But the moment Garga Ṛṣi beheld the infant, he realized that he had been invited to name Bhagavān Himself.

Overwhelmed, he fell to his knees in reverence and said, with a choked voice:

“What name can I give to this little boy who already has a thousand names? What name can I give to Him who is beyond all names?”

This story beautifully reminds us that Bhagavān resides in everyone. All our names are, in truth, His names, for He lives in all beings. Bhagavān does not have merely a thousand names, but countless, because His presence fills all creation.

Recognizing the Divine Within

Yet, as humans, we often fail to recognize the divine presence within ourselves. We suppress the godly impulses of love, compassion, and truth because of material distractions and attachments.

In Chapter 13 of the Gītā, Bhagavān describes His various roles within our lives:

***upadraṣṭānumantā cha bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ
paramātmēti chāpy ukto dehe 'smin puruṣhaḥ paraḥ***

- Upadraṣṭā – the Witness, silently observing our actions.
- **Anumantā** – the Permitter, allowing experiences to unfold.
- **Bhartā** – the Supporter and Sustainer.
- **Bhoktā** – the Enjoyer, the one who shares our experiences.
- **Maheshvara** – the Supreme Lord within us.

Our spiritual evolution depends on how deeply we meditate upon Him and how sincerely we devote ourselves to Him. When our devotion matures, we begin to act as Bhagavān would act, selflessly, lovingly, and wisely. Then we begin to see Bhagavān all around us, in everyone and in everything.

A Story to Reflect Upon

Once, a Major from the army visited a hospital. A nurse led him to an elderly patient and said, “Your son is here.” She had to repeat the words before the old man, weak and sedated, slowly opened his eyes.

Through the oxygen tent, he could dimly see a young man in uniform. Reaching out his trembling hand, the Major clasped it gently yet firmly, conveying comfort and strength.

Throughout the night, he sat by the old man’s bedside, refusing to rest, silently holding his hand.

Just before dawn, the old man passed away. The Major gently released the now lifeless hand and informed the nurse. When she returned, he quietly asked, “Who was that man?”

The nurse, surprised, said, “Wasn’t he your father?” The Major replied softly, “No, I had never seen him before.”

Startled, the nurse asked, “Then why didn’t you say something?” The Major answered, “I knew there was a mistake. But I also knew he needed his son, and his son wasn’t here. When I saw how much he needed someone to be with him, I stayed.”

He then added, “I actually came tonight to meet a Mr. Vikram Salariya, his son was killed in the Kashmir conflict yesterday, and I was sent to inform him.”

The nurse, moved to tears, whispered, “That man was Mr. Vikram Salariya.”

This story reminds us that even the smallest act of compassion can mean the world to someone. For that dying man, nothing was more comforting than holding the hand of his ‘son.’

Both the nurse and the Major stood in complete silence for some time, as both realized that nothing could be more reassuring to a dying man than the touch of his son’s hand.

In life, if someone needs us in such a way, we need not say much; just be there with them till the end. Our words, our enthusiasm, our assurance, and the feeling that “someone is there with me” are enough to heal a person’s heart.

Share your abundance with those who are unable. Generosity is our natural state, it is a godly attribute.

Empathy means to understand and feel what another person is experiencing, to sense naturally what they feel and how their emotions resonate within us. But unless we ourselves are stable, patient, and

calm from within, not only will we fail to help others, we will also fall short of fulfilling our own higher purpose in life.

Our behavior matters greatly. Whenever we see anyone, in any form, we should not see only the external appearance, but also the indwelling reality within that form.

This is true vision: to perceive the inner beauty that liberates us from the illusion of diversity and awakens in us the realization of the oneness of all existence.

How can we cultivate such vision?

The Bhagavad Gītā teaches us the way.

In Dhyāna Yoga (Chapter 6), Bhagavān shows the technique of meditation through which we can perceive the inner beauty in all beings. This awakening comes when we open our third eye (Ājñā Chakra), the subtle centre located between the eyebrows.

A simple practice for Third-Eye Meditation

(Though this is not a meditation class, let us briefly discuss a few simple steps.)

- Sit comfortably in a calm place.
- Take three deep breaths, inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth.
- Do this three times to settle the body and mind.
- When the breath becomes steady, focus your awareness gently on the point between the eyebrows, the bhrūmadhya.
- Sit in Dhyāna Mudrā (the meditation posture), resting your hands softly on your lap.
- If you wish, play some soothing meditation music, there are many available on YouTube or you can even say, “Alexa, play meditation music for 60 minutes.”
- Keep your awareness fixed between the eyebrows. Simply observe your breathing — the gentle rhythm of inhalation and exhalation.
- Thoughts will come and go; let them come, let them go, just remain a witness.

With repeated practice, this centre, called the Ājñā Chakra (Ājñā means ‘command’), begins to awaken. When this chakra opens, Nature itself starts responding to our inner voice.

This is how the third eye gradually opens. It is always best to learn the finer details under the guidance of one’s Guru. But the essence is: to see beyond appearances, to perceive the divine in everyone and everything.

This vision should not remain confined to temples or sacred places alone. Even in the marketplace and busy streets, we must strive to maintain the consciousness of unity amidst diversity.

We must feel the divine presence in and around us. When this awareness deepens, the Maheshvara, the Supreme Divine within, begins to get His work done through us.

Arjuna uses two significant adjectives in this śloka, Viśveśvara and Viśvarūpa.

- **Viśveśvara** means the Controller of the universe.
- **Viśvarūpa** means the Universal Form, the total manifestation.

Arjuna implies:

“O Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, this universe is nothing but Your own manifestation. You are the Viśveśvara, the Creator, and You are also the Viśvarūpa, the Creation itself, the grand manifestation, and above all, You are the Supreme Master.”

He further describes the vastness of this divine form:

From whichever direction he looks, he can find no end to Bhagavān's manifestation. When he searches for a beginning, he cannot find where it starts, because Bhagavān is birthless, without origin. When he seeks the middle, he finds no boundary; and when he looks for the end, again he finds none, for the Infinite has no limit.

Thus, Arjuna realizes that Bhagavān, being omnipresent, is the same everywhere, at all times, without beginning, without middle, and without end.

Let's see the 17th verse

11.17

**kirīṭinaṃ(ñ) gadiṇaṃ(ñ) cakriṇaṃ(ñ) ca,
tejorāśiṃ(m) sarvato dīptimantam,
paśyāmi tvāṃ(n) durnirīkṣyaṃ(m) śamantād-
dīptānalārkadyutimaprameyam. 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.

Arjuna continues his divine vision, describing what he beholds in awe:

He says, "O Bhagavān, I see You wearing a Kīrīṭa, a crown; holding the Gadā (mace) and Cakra (discus) in Your hands. Your radiance is blinding, immeasurable, and all-pervading. It fills the entire universe with dazzling light, like countless suns blazing in every direction."

Normally, the sun rises only in the east, but here Arjuna perceives the sun everywhere, its brilliance present in all directions at once. Our physical eyes cannot endure even the brightness of a single sun; imagine then the radiance that outshines a thousand suns, this was the glory of the cosmic form before Arjuna.

This form was so resplendent, so beyond human capacity, that no mortal eyes could behold it. Arjuna could see it only because Bhagavān had blessed him with divya-cakṣuḥ, divine eyes.

In that Viśvarūpa, Arjuna saw the emblems of Bhagavān Viṣṇu, **the Gadā (mace), Śaṅkha (conch), Cakra (discus), and Padma (lotus)**, symbols of divine power, protection, and purity. The presence of these symbols made it clear that the form Arjuna was witnessing was not merely that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but of Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself, the all-pervading one.

The symbolism of the Sun

In our tradition, Sūrya, the Sun, is revered as the visible manifestation of Bhagavān. It is a very personal way of saying thank you to the divine light that sustains our life, enabling us to live, work, study, and even pursue wealth.

The Sanskrit word Divākara means "the maker of the day." Every morning, the Sun truly "makes our day." We draw light, warmth, and nourishment from it, all life on earth depends upon this continuous miracle.

In this vision, Arjuna sees Bhagavān as the very source of that cosmic light, the radiance behind every sun, the brilliance that illumines all worlds.

The Incomprehensible Nature of Bhagavān

Arjuna describes Bhagavān as Aprameya , immeasurable, beyond comprehension.

To understand this, the scriptures explain that in the universe there are three aspects:

- **Jñātā** – the knower (the subject)
- **Jñeya** – the object that is to be known
- **Jñāna** – the process of knowing

Our antarātman (inner self) is the knower, our senses are the instruments of knowing, and the material world is the object of knowledge.

But Bhagavān can never become the object of such knowing. He cannot be grasped by the senses or the intellect. Bhagavān is not an object of sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch, all of which are limited to the realm of matter. Therefore, the Absolute is said to be inconceivable, incomprehensible, and imperceptible.

That is why Brahman, the Supreme Reality, is beyond the reach of our mind and senses. It can only be experienced when one transcends worldly bondage and attains Brahma-sthiti, the state of divine absorption.

The Meaning of Tejorāśiḥ — The Mass of Radiance

The verse says tejorāśiḥ sarvato dīptimantam, Bhagavān’s cosmic form was a mass of light, radiating in all directions, unlimited and dazzling.

No other brilliance could compare with it.

This radiance was not of this earth, it was supraterrrestrial, divya. It could be glimpsed only when the veil of ignorance was lifted and the divine consciousness awakened.

Even within that vast and blinding splendor, Arjuna could still perceive the distinct symbols of Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the Kīrīṭa (crown), Gadā (mace), Cakra (discus), Śaṅkha (conch), and Padma (lotus), confirming that the one standing before him was none other than the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu Himself, now revealed through Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s cosmic form.

In essence, this verse shows us that Bhagavān is not limited by time, space, or causation. He is beyond all, infinite, radiant, and all-pervading.

His divine light is not something we see with our eyes, but something we experience with the awakening of our inner vision, when the divine eye opens and we behold Him everywhere.

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.

Arjuna continues, saying: “You alone are the indestructible Supreme Being, worthy of being known. You are the Supreme God, the Supreme Puruṣa. You are the ultimate Creator, the foundation and sole support of this universe. You are the imperishable protector of eternal Dharma (Dharma-goptā). You

alone are the boundless, eternal Puruṣa, this is my firm opinion (mataḥ).”

By this, Arjuna declares his recognition of the sovereignty of Śrī Krishna as the Supreme Divine, the supporter of all creation and the One to be known through all scriptures. The essence of all Vedic mantras is to direct us toward Him, for He is the object of study of the Vedas themselves. As the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam also declares, the goal of cultivating Vedic knowledge is to attain the realization of Bhagavan. All sacrifices and yajñas are ultimately performed for His pleasure.

In his tribute to Krishna, Arjuna expresses the realization that the personal form of Bhagavan standing before him is the same Supreme Absolute Truth that is the object of all scriptural study and Vedic knowledge.

This verse, therefore, encapsulates the essence of the Tattva, that Bhagavan is imperishable, eternal, the creator, and the very foundation of the entire cosmos.

However, it must be noted that the word Puruṣa here does not refer to a male being. The term “Puruṣa” should not be misinterpreted as implying that only men are divine. Pur means a dwelling or city, as in names like Nagpur, Jaipur, or Kanpur. In Chapter 5, we learned that the Chaitanya Ātman (conscious self) dwells within the Navadvāra Purī, the body with nine gates. Hence, “Puruṣa” signifies “the indweller” or “the conscious being,” not “a male.”

Thus, it is wrong to misuse this word to justify male superiority or to suppress women. Bhagavad Gītā does not say that only men represent Bhagavan. “Puruṣa” here means the Supreme Consciousness that pervades all living beings, male, female, or otherwise. Bhagavan is beyond gender, beyond all dualities.

In this śloka, therefore, Prabhu is described as imperishable, supreme, attributeless, and formless, the Parabrahma realized by liberated souls. The ultimate goal of human life is to attain liberation (mokṣa) and realize this eternal truth.

bhūta-grāmaḥ sa evāyaṁ bhūtvā bhūtvā praliyate rātryāgame ’vaśhaḥ pārtha prabhavatyahar-āgame

Arjuna also acknowledges that the Supreme Divine is the ultimate refuge and support of the entire universe. At the time of final dissolution (Mahāpralaya), the universe merges into Him; and with the dawn of creation, it again emanates from Him. The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam states that when righteousness declines and unrighteousness rises, the Lord incarnates to destroy evil and re-establish Sanātana Dharma.

He is the eternal, imperishable Being, unaffected even when the entire cosmos dissolves. He is the Ādi Puruṣa, the Parabrahma, from whom everything originates and into whom everything returns. Arjuna’s realization here echoes what the Lord explained earlier in Chapter 8: all beings arise from Him and ultimately rest in Him.

The Supreme Divine's powers, Sat, Chit, and Ānanda, emanate from Him. He is the sole creator and the eternal protector of Dharma, the divine law that sustains the universe. “Om” and “Tat” symbolize His universal and individual aspects.

Thus, in this verse, Arjuna addresses Śrī Krishna as the imperishable truth, the basis of all existence, the eternal Dharma, and the timeless spirit—Puruṣa.

Anecdote

Once, a king invited many scholars and saints to his court and asked a profound question: “Which is the one thing in this world that never perishes? My kingdom will fade, my wealth will vanish, and even my body will one day turn to dust. Then what is eternal?”

The scholars gave many answers. Some said knowledge is imperishable; others said virtue or fame endures. Finally, a saint who had remained silent was asked to speak. He said: “Your Majesty, all these, wealth, fame, even knowledge, have their limits. The only imperishable truth is the Divine Consciousness, the Paramātmā. It is the foundation of all Dharma, the support of the universe, and the eternal witness of everything. Everything else comes and goes, but the Divine Consciousness remains unchanged.”

Hearing this, the king bowed down and said, “Truly, you have shown me what is eternal.”

The eternal Supreme Divine is the imperishable foundation of everything in this universe. Recognizing this truth, Bhagavan as the unchanging reality behind all change, is the essence of wisdom.

11.19

**Anādimadhyāntamanantavīryam,
anantabāhuṃ(m) śāśisūryanetram,
paśyāmi tvāṃ(n) dīptahutāśaVāktram,
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.

The Vision of the Infinite

Arjuna, overwhelmed by the Viśvarūpa (cosmic form) of Bhagavān, once again exclaims what he had already expressed earlier, that the divine form is without beginning (anādi), without middle (madhya), and without end (ananta). This repetition is not a mere redundancy; it reflects the natural expression of astonishment, wonder, and ecstasy that arises when a finite being beholds the Infinite.

Just as one, upon seeing a sudden extraordinary sight, may cry out “Look! Look! Look!” again and again, not because one forgets what was said, but because the mind, overwhelmed by emotion, repeats itself instinctively — so too does Arjuna’s heart overflow with wonder. His repeated declarations are spontaneous outpourings of devotion and amazement, not intellectual redundancy.

In verse 16, Arjuna had said, “I see neither Your beginning, nor middle, nor end.” There, his description referred to the spatial infinitude of Bhagavān — His immeasurable expanse in all directions.

Here, in verse 19, Arjuna extends his vision beyond space to encompass time itself, recognising Bhagavān as the eternal source, the One who transcends all limitations of past, present, and future. Thus, what was earlier expressed in terms of space now extends to the dimension of time, He is beyond both.

The Timeless, Spaceless Paramātmā

Bhagavān is **anādi**, without beginning, because He is birthless. He is **ananta**, without end, because He is deathless. Being beyond birth and death, He stands beyond the very framework of space and time.

Time and space exist within Him; they do not bind Him. Just as the waves exist within the ocean but cannot limit its depth, time and space exist within the vast consciousness of the Paramātmā, yet cannot measure or encompass Him.

He pervades all, sustains all, yet remains untouched and immeasurable. Therefore, Arjuna beholds Him as the source of all movement, energy, and brilliance, yet beyond the very concept of measure or limitation.

The Infinite Energy and Light

Arjuna describes Bhagavān as **ananta-vīrya**, “of infinite strength.” His vīrya (power, potency, energy) is without bounds. He possesses **ananta-bāhu**, countless arms, symbolic of His omnipotent reach, extending everywhere to protect, to guide, and to sustain.

The **śaśi-sūrya-netra**, the moon and the sun, are His eyes. Through these, the universe is illuminated; day and night themselves are His glances.

Thus, the light that enlivens all beings comes from Him alone. He is the source of luminosity, not a borrower of it, sva-tejasā, “by His own brilliance,” He illumines everything.

The vaktra, His mouth, is dīpta-hutāśa, a blazing fire. It is this same divine fire that receives the offerings in every yajña, the sacred fire-sacrifice. Indeed, all the sacrificial flames of the world are but reflections of His cosmic fire. Arjuna beholds that this fiery mouth radiates such light that it heats (tapantam) and energizes the entire cosmos.

The Self-Luminous Consciousness

This sva-tejas, His self-effulgence, is not dependent on anything else. Just as the sun does not need another lamp to shine, Bhagavān’s light is self-born and eternal.

All luminaries, the sun, moon, stars, fire, borrow their brilliance from Him. He, however, borrows from none.

The same principle applies to the Ātman within all beings, the chaitanya or consciousness that illumines thoughts, sensations, and experiences is self-luminous. It requires no external light to know itself; it is the knower of all lights. From this self-luminous consciousness, life and creation emerge, just as light emanates from a flame.

An Analogy: The Villagers and the Ocean

To understand Arjuna’s state of awe, one may consider the story of the villagers and the sea.

There was once a group of villagers who had never seen the ocean. Their world consisted only of small ponds and narrow rivers. One day, a traveler who had seen the sea arrived in their village. Curious, the villagers asked, “What is the sea like?”

The traveler thought for a moment and said, “Imagine your pond, but infinitely larger.”

The villagers asked, “Twice as large?”

The traveler laughed, “No, countless times greater! You cannot see its far shore. Its waves roar endlessly, its depth cannot be measured.”

The villagers tried to imagine this “sea,” but their limited experience of ponds could not contain the vastness of what he described.

In the same way, when Bhagavān revealed His Viśvarūpa, Arjuna stood like those villagers, his understanding stretched to its limit, unable to comprehend the infinite. The cosmic form, Anādi-madhyāntam ananta-vīryam, was immeasurable, glowing with the light of thousands of suns, blazing

with timeless splendour.

Reflection

The moral of this vision is profound: The Divine Reality cannot be confined within the boundaries of human understanding. Bhagavān's essence is boundless, radiant, and beyond the reach of sensory or intellectual perception.

As finite beings, humans can at best glimpse a fraction of that Infinity, and even that glimpse fills the heart with reverence, wonder, and surrender.

Thus, in this verse, Arjuna's vision symbolises the meeting point of human perception and divine infinitude, where language falters, reason bows, and only bhakti, awe, and silence remain.

Summary

- **Anādi-madhyāntam:** Without beginning, middle, or end, beyond time.
- **Ananta-vīryam:** Infinite in strength, power, and potential.
- **Ananta-bāhuṃ:** Countless arms, the omnipotent doer.
- **Śaśi-sūrya-netram:** The sun and moon as eyes, the illuminators of the world.
- **Dīpta-hutāśa-vaktram:** Mouths of blazing fire, consuming, transforming, purifying.
- **Sva-tejasā tapantam:** Self-effulgent light heating and energizing the entire cosmos.

In short, Arjuna beholds Bhagavān as the all-encompassing Paramātmā, timeless, spaceless, radiant, and boundless.

The previous verses expressed the infinite expanse of His form in space; this verse expresses His infinitude in time, the Eternal who contains all beginnings and ends within Himself, yet Himself has neither.

11.20

**dyāvapṛthivyoridamantaram(m) hi,
vyāptam(n) tvayaikena diśaśca sarvāḥ,
dr̥ṣṭvādbhutam(m) rūpamugram(n) tavedam(m),
lokatrayam(m) pravyathitam(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.

The Infinite Space Between Heaven and Earth

Arjuna now turns from the description of Bhagavān's cosmic body to the effect it produces in all of creation. He perceives that the entire space between heaven (svarga) and earth (pṛthivī), and indeed the entirety of the three worlds (triloka), is pervaded by the Paramātmā alone.

- **disasca sarvah:** Bhagavān pervades all ten directions, east, west, north, south, northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest, upwards, and downwards, and even beyond, in directions unknown to mortals.
- **Mahā-Ātman:** Arjuna refers to Bhagavān as the greatest of souls, Mahātmā, indicating that no other being, however exalted, can equal Him.

This pervasion is not merely spatial. It signifies that every particle, every living being, every realm exists within Him. The Viśvarūpa is not an external spectacle but a cosmic truth: all existence is subsumed in the Paramātmā's infinite being.

Trembling of the Three Worlds

Arjuna observes that the three worlds, heaven (svarga), earth (pṛthivī), and the netherworld (pātāla), tremble before this magnificent form.

This trembling does not require that the inhabitants physically see the Viśvarūpa.

Rather, it is a psychic or energetic response: the universe itself, bound by the laws of karma and dharma, reacts to the overwhelming power and energy of the cosmic form.

Even unseen, its effects are manifest, much like the profound unease and silence experienced during a total solar eclipse, when natural rhythms pause and every living being senses the extraordinary presence of cosmic forces. Birds halt mid-flight; humans experience awe and stillness.

Thus, the cosmic body of Bhagavān generates a felt reality, a perceptible effect on the world, even without direct vision.

Arjuna's Fear and Human Limitation

- Arjuna addresses Bhagavān with both reverence and fear, acknowledging the boundless majesty of the Viśvarūpa.
- This fear is a natural reflection of attachment to the body and the finite self.
- To perceive the infinite, one must temporarily transcend the identification with the limited body and mind.
- The human self is accustomed to a finite experience, I am this body, I am this mind. To encounter the limitless essence of Param Brahma, the finite I must dissolve.

This creates a psychological tension:

- “If my ‘I’ dissolves, who will experience the infinite?”
- The mind struggles to imagine existence beyond the body. The attachment to embodiment is so ingrained that even meditation can provoke fear, the fear of losing oneself, of vanishing into infinity.
- Many aspirants experience this during deep meditation: the awareness of body and world fades, creating temporary disorientation or existential fear.

Yet, this is precisely the gateway to perceiving the infinite. One cannot retain the sense of a limited self and simultaneously experience the boundless Paramātmā.

The Law of Karma and Universal Reverence

Arjuna notes that even though the inhabitants of the three worlds cannot directly see the Viśvarūpa, they still tremble in fear. This indicates:

- All beings function according to divine law, the order established by Bhagavān.
- Their fear reflects the unseen dominion of His cosmic will, the law of karma, where every action produces results.
- The universe operates under His control, His commands and decrees manifest in natural and moral law, compelling submission even in the absence of direct perception.

Thus, Bhagavān's omnipresence is both manifest and functional: His radiance, power, and law pervade all creation, producing reverence and fear without requiring direct vision.

Experiencing the Infinite

Arjuna's dialogue with Bhagavān highlights a profound philosophical truth:

- The limited cannot grasp the limitless while clinging to the finite.
- Fear arises as the ego, identification with the body, anticipates dissolution.
- True perception of the infinite requires the temporary suspension of 'I am the body'.
- Even in awe and fear, the aspirant glimpses the boundless reality, the Mahā-Ātman that pervades all space and time.

Arjuna's fear is not mere cowardice; it is the natural response of a finite being encountering the unfathomable vastness of the divine.

Summary

- **Pervasion of Space:** The entire expanse between heaven and earth is filled with Bhagavān alone.
- **Omnipresence:** Bhagavān occupies all ten directions and beyond, visible in effects even if not directly seen.
- **Trembling of the Worlds:** All beings, from gods to humans, respond to the cosmic energy with fear and awe.
- **Human Limitation:** Arjuna's fear reflects the challenge of transcending attachment to the finite self to experience the infinite.
- **Law of Karma:** All beings, whether conscious of the Viśvarūpa or not, function under the divine order.

In essence: The verse reveals that Bhagavān's infinitude is simultaneously awe-inspiring and fearsome, experienced fully by those with the vision to perceive the cosmic reality, while still influencing the entire universe beyond direct perception.

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.

The Confluence of Fear and Devotion

In this verse, Arjuna shifts his focus from the sheer magnitude and terrifying brilliance of the Viśvarūpa to the response of the beings inhabiting the cosmos.

- **Sura and Asura Saṅghāḥ:** "Groups of demigods (sura) and anti-gods (asura)" are entering the cosmic form of Bhagavān.
- **Vishanti:** This means "enter into" or "merge with", they approach with submission and reverence, folding their hands in praṇāma (prañjal) to acknowledge the supreme authority.

Arjuna observes that many of these celestial beings act out of fear, recognizing the unstoppable power of time (kāla) which destroys all, even the gods. Their adoration is involuntary yet sincere, an instinctive surrender to the overwhelming might of the Viśvarūpa.

The Perfected Beings: Siddhas, Rishis, and Yogīs

Simultaneously, Arjuna sees siddhas, sages, and liberated souls, highly evolved spiritual beings, praising Bhagavān with enthusiasm, clarity, and understanding:

- Unlike the trembling demigods, these spiritual luminaries comprehend the purpose of the divine revelation.
- They worship voluntarily, with words, thoughts, and actions in perfect alignment (satataṁ yoginaḥ).
- Exemplars like Kapila, Narada, Bhrigu, Atri, and Vyasa represent beings who remain calm and devoted, unaffected by the fearful aspects of the cosmic form. Their devotion is rooted in wisdom, insight, and recognition of the eternal.

This contrast demonstrates a profound principle:

The same divine manifestation evokes fear in the unprepared and reverence in the spiritually mature.

The Clay Analogy: Seeing the Essence Beyond Form

To illustrate the vision of the Viśvarūpa, consider this analogy:

A child plays with clay toys, animals, houses, and figures, becoming attached to each, quarreling over ownership.

The sculptor father takes all the forms, compresses them back into a lump of clay, and explains:

“All these forms are nothing but clay. Though shapes differ, the essence is one.”

Similarly:

- Arjuna had known Bhagavān as friend, guide, and charioteer.
- Upon witnessing the Viśvarūpa, he perceives all beings, all worlds, all forms, creation, preservation, and destruction, as expressions of the same supreme reality.
- Just as the child realizes the unity behind diversity, Arjuna sees the oneness of all existence in Krishna.
- This vision transcends attachment, fear, and limited perception, expanding consciousness to include the entirety of the universe as a divine manifestation.

Philosophical Significance

The Divine is Infinite and Multifaceted:

- Bhagavān is not confined to a single form or name.
- All beings, forms, and worlds are manifestations of His infinite reality.

The Response Depends on Perception:

- The unprepared experience fear and awe, instinctively responding to His overwhelming power.
- The enlightened, however, respond with comprehension, devotion, and calmness, recognizing the underlying unity and purpose.

Integration of Fear, Devotion, and Understanding:

- Even fear becomes a pathway to surrender, guiding beings towards realization of the supreme reality.
- True vision, as granted to Arjuna, dissolves duality, revealing that the infinite is present in all finite forms.

This verse captures the cosmic interplay of reverence and fear, illustrating that all beings, whether trembling or calm, ultimately acknowledge the supremacy of the Paramātmā. It also reveals the profound truth that the multiplicity of the universe is one in essence.

11.22

**rudrādityā vasavo ye ca sādhyā,
viśveśvinau marutaścoṣmapāśca,
gandharvayakṣāsurasiddhasaṅghā,
vikṣante tvām(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.

In this verse, Arjuna observes that all classes of divine and semi-divine beings behold the infinite cosmic form (Viśvarūpa) of Bhagavān in wonder. Their reverence, awe, and amazement illustrate the universal recognition of the supreme reality, transcending even the most exalted entities in the cosmos.

Groups of Celestial and Semi-Divine Beings

1. Rudras (Eleven Rudras)

The Rudras are manifestations of Bhagavān Śiva, representing destructive and transformative energies essential for cosmic balance. The eleven Rudras are:

Hara, Bahurūpa, Tryambaka, Aparājita, Vṛṣākapi, Śambhu, Kapardi, Raivata, Mṛgavyaḍha, Sarva, Kapāli.

2. Ādityas (Twelve Sons of Aditi)

The Ādityas are solar deities and sons of Aditi, representing various aspects of cosmic order and governance. The twelve Ādityas are:

Dhāta, Mitra, Āryama, Śakra, Varuṇa, Amśa, Bhaga, Vivasvan, Puṣa, Savita, Tvaṣṭā, Vāmana.

3. Vasus (Eight Vasus)

The Vasus are elemental deities associated with material and cosmic forces. They govern different aspects of nature and the physical universe. The eight Vasus are:

Dhara (Earth), Anila (Wind), Anala (Fire), Āpa (Water), Soma (Moon), Pratyuṣa (Dawn), Prabhāsa (Light), Dhruva (Pole Star).

4. Sādhyas

The Sādhyas are a class of deities often associated with perfection, wisdom, and divine virtue. They are sometimes described as the twelve “sons of wisdom”:

Manas, Anumana, Prāṇa, Nara, Apāna, Viti, Nāya, Haya, Hariṅsa, Nārāyaṇa, Vibhū, Prabhu.

5. Viśvadevas

The Viśvadevas are universal deities, appearing in various lists across texts. One common list of ten Viśvadevas includes:

Ṛtu, Dakṣa, Vasu, Satya, Kāma, Kāla, Dhuri, Rocana, Umādravā, Purūrava.

6. Aśvini Kumāras

The twin Aśvini Kumāras are the divine physicians, sons of Saranyu and Vivasvan, renowned for their healing powers and youthful vitality.

7. Maruts (Forty-Nine Storm Deities)

The Maruts are associated with wind, storms, and energy, exemplifying dynamic cosmic forces. The

forty-nine Maruts include:

Sattvajyoti, Āditya, Satyajyoti, Tiryagjyoti, Sajyoti, Jyotiṣman, Harita, Ritajit, Satyajit, Suśena, Senajit, Satyamitra, Abhimitra, Harimitra, Kṛta, Satya, Dhruva, Dhārta, Vidhārta, Vidhāraya, Dhvanta, Dhuni, Ugra, Bhīma, Abhiyu, Sākṣīpa, Īdrik, Anyādrik, Yādrik, Pratikṛt, Ṛk, Samiti, Samrambha, Īdrikṣa, Puruṣa, Anyādrikṣa, Chetasa, Samita, Samidrikṣa, Praticdrikṣa, Maruti, Śarata, Deva, Diśa, Yajuh, Anudrik, Sama, Manuṣa, Viś.

8. Gandharvas and Yakṣas

- Gandharvas: Celestial musicians and performers for the gods, celebrated for their artistic and musical excellence.
- Yakṣas: Nature spirits, guardians of treasures, sacred places, and wealth; often associated with the preservation of natural and spiritual resources.

9. Pitṛs (Ancestors)

The Pitṛs are the revered ancestors, guiding and watching over their descendants, representing continuity of lineage and dharma.

10. Āsuras (Anti-Gods or Demons)

The Āsuras represent forces opposing divine order, yet even they recognize the supreme authority of Bhagavān when confronted with His universal form.

11. Siddhas (Perfected Beings)

Siddhas are spiritually perfected souls, liberated or partially liberated, who embody yogic and spiritual attainment and praise Bhagavān with clarity, devotion, and knowledge.

11.23

**rūpaṃ(m) mahatte bahuVāktranetraṃ(m),
mahābāho bahubāhūrupādam,
bahūdaraṃ(m) bahudaṃṣṭrākārālaṃ(n),
dṛṣṭvā lokāḥ(ph) pravayathitāstathāham. 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.

In this section of the Viśvarūpa Darśana Adhyāya, Arjuna describes the fearsome and overwhelming aspects of Bhagavān's cosmic form. This part emphasizes the terrifying yet awe-inspiring facets of the supreme reality, showing the infinitude and omnipotence of Bhagavān.

The Terrifying Features of the Viśvarūpa

Arjuna observes:

- **Bahū-mukha** – Bhagavān has countless faces. Each face expresses a different aspect of His cosmic power.
- **Netra** – The eyes are innumerable, seeing all creation simultaneously.
- **Mahā-bhu** – The arms are mighty, demonstrating strength beyond comprehension.
- **Bahu-uru** – The thighs are vast and powerful.
- **Udaram** – Multiple bellies, symbolizing His capacity to contain and nurture the universe.
- **Bhu-danta** – Numerous teeth, fearsome and awe-inspiring, representing the destructive aspect of time and cosmic dissolution.

Arjuna narrates:

“Oh Mahā-bāhu, seeing Your immeasurable and terrifying form with countless mouths, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, bellies, and dreadful teeth, all worlds are perturbed and terror-stricken, and so am I.”

This observation conveys that even the most exalted beings, celestial realms, and Arjuna himself are overwhelmed by the cosmic magnitude of Bhagavān.

Structure of the Description in Ślokas 11.15-30

- **Ślokas 11.15-18:** These describe the divine manifestations of the cosmic form, emphasizing the infinite cosmic body that transcends ordinary perception.
- **Ślokas 11.19-20:** They present the terrifying aspects, showing the effect of the cosmic form on the universe, including the trembling of beings.
- **Ślokas 11.22-30:** These detail the dreadful, fearsome aspects of the Viśvarūpa, with emphasis on multiple mouths, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, bellies, and gruesome teeth.

Why Arjuna Repeats Himself

Arjuna’s repetition is not an error, but a natural expression of human response to the novelty and intensity of the vision:

- **Novelty in Each Aspect:** Each part of the Viśvarūpa possesses unique and astonishing features, requiring renewed description.
- **Overwhelmed Consciousness:** Arjuna’s mind is bewildered and alarmed, unable to hold the entire vision in memory. The emotion compels repetition.
- **Expression of Awe and Fear:** As discussed earlier, humans often repeat words when overcome by intense emotion, e.g., shouting “snake! snake!” upon seeing a snake. Similarly, Arjuna repeatedly emphasizes the terrifying aspects of Bhagavān’s form.

The Upanishadic Perspective

- The Upanishads describe the supreme entity as transcendental yet all-pervading:
- Bhagavān has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet.
- He envelops the universe while remaining beyond it.
- He resides in every being, in the lotus of the heart, yet is not confined by space or time.

The Upanishads also assert:

“It is from the fear of Bhagavān that the fire burns; it is from the fear of Him that the sun shines; it is from the fear of Him that the wind blows; and Indra causes the rain to fall. Even Yamarāja trembles before Him.”

This establishes that all natural forces, cosmic laws, and divine powers operate under the dominion of the supreme Paramātmā, highlighting His omnipotence.

All Beings Are Part of the Cosmic Form

An important philosophical insight emerges here:

- **No Being is Outside Bhagavān:** Those who behold, those who are beheld, the terrified and those terrifying — all are encompassed within the Viśvarūpa.
- **Unity of the Cosmos:** Arjuna, celestial beings, sages, and even asuras are integral to the cosmic form. Nothing exists outside the Paramātmā.
- **Fear as a Reflection of Attachment:** Arjuna’s fear is the natural response of a limited being encountering the limitless, reflecting the tension between finite human perception and the infinite reality of Bhagavān.

This highlights a key spiritual principle:

To perceive the infinite, the limited identification with the body and mind must temporarily dissolve, allowing one to apprehend the boundless essence of Paramātmā.

11.24

**nabhaḥspṛśam(n) dīptamanekavarṇam(m),
vyāttānanam(n) dīptaviśālanetram,
dṛṣṭvā hi tvām(m) pravyathitāntarātmā,
dhṛtim(n) na vindāmi śamam(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.

The Transformation of Arjuna's Perception: From Krishna to Vishnu

- nabhaḥ-spṛśam—touching the sky;
- dīptam—effulgent;
- aneka—many;
- varṇam—colors;
- vyāta—open;
- ānanam—mouths;
- dīpta—blazing;
- viśhāla—enormous;
- netram—eyes;
- dṛṣṭvā—seeing;
- pravyathitāntar-ātmā—my heart is trembling with fear;
- dhṛtim—firmness;
- vindāmi—I find;
- śhamam—mental peace;
- viṣṇo—Lord Vishnu

Everything exists in that form alone. Arjuna, upon witnessing the cosmic form of Bhagavān, experiences an overwhelming vision: the sky is touched by the enormous, multicolored body of the Prabhu, with glowing ānka (divine hues) radiating in myriad subtle shades. Arjuna feels anam-anam, a sensation beyond words, within his mouth, while the divine light (dīpam) emanates brilliance, his eyes reflecting awe and fear. Vishal, infinitely vast, with great and luminous eyes, the cosmic form conveys the transcendental majesty of Bhagavān beyond ordinary comprehension.

From within, Arjuna experiences steadiness of the ātma, a calm yet trembling mental tranquility (śānti), yet he admits, “Na vindāmi”, he cannot fully grasp or remain unshaken. He addresses Bhagavān not as Krishna but as Vishnu. Arjuna says: “When I see Your palm touching the sky, when Your multicolored form spreads across the cosmos, when Your mouth is wide open and Your shining, immense eyes gaze upon me, my heart trembles, courage falters, and I lose all peace.”

At this moment, the cosmic vision transforms Arjuna's perception of Krishna. He understands fully that His charioteer, his intimate friend, is none other than Bhagavān Vishnu, the supreme Paramātmā incarnate, who has assumed the form of Krishna to lighten the burden of the world.

Friendship vs. Divine Awe in Devotion

Earlier, Arjuna had engaged with Krishna as a close friend, the bond of intimacy so profound that he would often forget the supreme divinity of Krishna. The overflowing love in Arjuna's heart absorbed

his awareness of Krishna's almighty aspect. This is the nature of love: it can immerse the devotee so fully that the formal or hierarchical status of the beloved becomes secondary.

A parallel can be drawn with human relationships: a wife may deeply love her husband. Though he may be the governor of a state, within the home she only sees him as her husband. She interacts with him intimately, without the constant reminder of his official power. If she were to maintain constant formal reverence, addressing him solely as "My Lord", the relationship would lose its natural warmth, becoming ceremonial rather than affectionate.

Similarly, in bhakti, the devotee may focus on personal closeness with Bhagavān. In Arjuna's case, the deep familiarity and friendship with Krishna had allowed him to consider Him as a beloved companion, overriding formal recognition of Krishna as Paramātmā.

Pastimes of Krishna and the Cowherd Friends (Gopāḷas)

The cowherd friends of Krishna (Gopāḷas) exemplify this intimate sentiment. They viewed Krishna merely as a cherished friend, engaging in playful pastimes. When Krishna would play and lose a game, He would lie down like a horse, with His friends riding on Him, showing no fear. If they had constantly remembered Krishna's divine status, such playful familiarity would have been impossible.

One famous incident, the Govardhana Līlā, illustrates this vividly. When torrential rains from Indra threatened the village, Krishna lifted Govardhana Hill on the little finger of His left hand to protect the cowherd residents. The cowherd friends, confident in their playful innocence, placed sticks under the hill, thinking they were helping to lift it. They did not fear Krishna; in their eyes, He remained their dear friend.

When Indra, king of heaven, came down to offer obeisances to Krishna, the cowherd boys realized that their friend was indeed Bhagavān. Suddenly, their sentiment shifted from friendship to awe and reverence. Krishna, observing this change, felt disturbed. The living intimacy, the playful exchange He cherished with His devotees, had vanished under fear of His divinity. Using His yogamāyā power, Krishna restored their previous understanding: in their eyes, He became once again their playful friend.

Arjuna's Dual Perception: Friendship and Fear

Arjuna, in a similar manner, had maintained Sākhyabhāva, a mood of friendship, with Krishna. This was why he could readily accept Krishna as his charioteer. If Arjuna had fully recognized Krishna as the supreme Bhagavān from the outset, such intimate and demeaning service would have been inconceivable. The friendship sentiment allowed practical cooperation and personal interaction.

However, upon witnessing the Viśvarūpa—the cosmic, infinite form of Krishna, Arjuna's friendly sentiment transformed into fear. The realization struck: his charioteer, once his dearest friend, is Bhagavān Vishnu Himself, the supreme Paramātmā, incarnate to restore dharma.

The cosmic form was unimaginably multicolored, immense, touching the skies, with an all-consuming mouth and shining, fierce eyes. Arjuna confesses that he was overwhelmed, his courage faltered, self-control vanished, and peace of mind disappeared. Such a direct experience of the infinite is unsettling for anyone unprepared, divine or otherwise.

Dvaita Bhāva and Advaita in the Bhagavad Gītā

The transformation of Arjuna's perception highlights the Dvaita Bhāva of the Bhagavad Gītā: the worshipper and the worshipped remain distinct. Even the celestial beings tremble at the terrifying cosmic form, showing that duality is acknowledged: they are different, He is different.

Yet, the greatness of Bhagavān is that He transcends any single viewpoint. Whether the devotee's sentiment is Dvaita (dual) or Advaita (non-dual), Bhagavān makes His grace accessible. He caters to sincere hearts irrespective of their disposition, affirming His universal, all-encompassing nature.

Through the Viśvarūpa-darśana, Arjuna transitions from intimate friendship to awe-filled reverence. He realizes that Krishna, his beloved friend, is indeed Bhagavān Vishnu, the supreme Paramātma. Yet, the Gītā's wisdom accommodates both moods: devotion born of personal intimacy and devotion born of fear and awe. This duality illustrates the depth of bhakti and the incomprehensible majesty of Bhagavān, who manifests Himself according to the readiness and devotion of the seeker.

Arjuna's declaration marks a pivotal transformation: friendship now gives way to reverence, yet the Gītā ensures that sincere bhakti remains accessible at all levels, blending intimacy with awe, love with respect, and devotion with surrender.

11.25

**damṣṭrākarālāni ca te mukhāni,
drṣṭvaiva 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.

The Terrifying Form of Bhagavān: Arjuna Beholds the Destroyer

As Arjuna gazed upon the cosmic form of Bhagavān, a new vision unfolded, one unlike the earlier displays of beauty and splendour. This was the terrifying aspect, the form of destruction and dissolution, revealing that Bhagavān is the totality of creation, preservation, and annihilation.

Arjuna saw the mukha (mouth) of Bhagavān with fearsome teeth, blazing like raging fire at the time of universal dissolution. The teeth shone like flames threatening to consume all directions (dikṣa), evoking the fear of pralaya, the great cosmic dissolution. Overwhelmed, Arjuna admitted:

"I cannot discern the four quarters of the world; I lose all sense of direction, nor do I find peace."

In this moment, Arjuna implored:

"Prasīda, Jagannātha, Lord of gods, refuge of the universe, be gracious. Have mercy on me."

Here, Arjuna perceives Bhagavān as the destroyer, the ender of all, the ultimate force before which even the very notion of time, space, and direction vanishes. He recognizes the divine reality: annihilation comes inevitably, whether to the smallest microbe, to human beings, or to celestial bodies. Life spans vary immensely, from the ephemeral existence of insects, which may last only hours, to the lifespan of stars and galaxies stretching billions of years, but destruction comes to all.

Consider the monsoon moth (patanga): its lifespan is mere hours. It knows nothing of human calendars, months, or years; every second is precious. On the other end of the cosmic scale is the Sun (Sūrya), born approximately 4.6 billion years ago, destined to last perhaps another 4 billion years. In comparison to the lifespan of galaxies, even the Sun's life is fleeting. And yet, Bhagavān transcends all these cycles, revealing that the universe itself is impermanent. Estimates of cosmic lifespans range from tens of billions of years onward, yet ultimately, Bhagavān alone determines the cessation of all.

Yet, the Gītā offers hope: while everything perishes, the consciousness of the devotee, free from selfish desires, transcends death. In Hindu teaching, death is likened to a thief who robs only those wealthy in material and egoistic cravings. Selfish desires—"I must have this, I must do that"—bind beings to the physical and mental body. When death arrives, it finds a "rich" person to seize. The Gītā teaches that by abandoning attachment, desires, and obsessive identification with the body, one becomes imperishable. Death can claim nothing; consciousness remains unbroken. The eternal self, the fragment of Bhagavān's love, is untouched even by the ultimate change called death.

A story illustrates this truth vividly: long ago, a saint meditated under a banyan tree. A trembling boy ran to him, terrified, saying he had seen a tiger in the forest, its fierce eyes and sharp teeth filling him with fear, as though death itself stood before him. The saint smiled gently and explained:

"Child, the tiger you saw is only a reflection of the great truth. Just as you saw the tiger and felt fear, Arjuna saw the terrifying teeth and blazing mouths of Bhagavān in His cosmic destroyer form. Yet behind that fearsome aspect is the same Lord who protects, nurtures, and guides. The terrifying form and the gentle, loving form are one and the same divine reality."

The boy's fear melted. He folded his hands in reverence, realizing that even dreadful events are expressions of the same Bhagavān.

Similarly, in the Viśvarūpa-darśana, Arjuna beholds both aspects of Bhagavān: the gentle protector and the terrifying destroyer. To the ignorant, the destructive form invokes fear; to the wise, it reveals supreme power and eternal truth: all that exists is Bhagavān.

Thus, the lesson emerges clearly: the divine manifests in both gentle and terrible forms. Recognition of both allows the devotee to understand the completeness of Bhagavān, transcending fear and attachment, and embracing the eternal reality.

Jai Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The next verses will be discussed in the upcoming Vivechan next week. The floor is now open for any questions, reflections, or clarifications you may have.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Rajendra ji

Question: If fate is fixed at birth, how can pūjās, yajñas, or prayers change it?"

Answer: Destiny (daiva) cannot be entirely altered, but past saṃskāras can be purified through sincere effort and spiritual practice. Even those with a sinful past can transform by committing to righteous actions and devotional life.

As one progresses on the spiritual path, through bhakti-yoga, sādhanā, and dedication to Bhagavān, the influence of past deeds fades. The mind attains equanimity (samatā), debts of karma are approached calmly, and inner freedom is realized. While fate sets the stage, devotion and disciplined effort allow the devotee to rise above past impressions and progress spiritually.

The discourse concluded with a prārthanā (prayer) at the padakamala (lotus feet) of Śrī Hari, followed by the recitation of the Hanumān Chalisa.



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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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