

of wisdom, one can distinguish the real from the unreal, but it is only by the divine eye that one could behold Him.



Link :—Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next verse orders Arjuna to behold His divine gentle form in order to remove his fear.

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो
 दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृङ्ममेदम्।
 व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं
 तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥ ४९ ॥

mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍhabhāvo
 dr̥ṣṭvā rūpaṁ ghoramīdṛṅmamedam
 vyapetabhiḥ prītamanāḥ punastvaṁ
 tadeva me rūpamidam prapaśya

On seeing such a frightening form of Mine, be neither afraid nor bewildered. With a fearless and complacent mind, behold once again the same four-armed form of Mine. 49

Comment:—

'Mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍhabhāvo dr̥ṣṭvā rūpaṁ ghoramīdṛṅmamedam'— Lord Kṛṣṇa, says to Arjuna that seeing His dreadful form, with mouths terrible with teeth, in which the chief warriors are rushing headlong, and some are seen sticking in the gaps between the teeth, with their heads crushed, and He, devouring all the worlds with His flaming mouths, licking them on all sides, he should neither be afraid nor bewildered, and he should rather be pleased. It means, that it was proper on his part to feel delighted, as he had felt (11/45) by thinking of the grace, instead of being bewildered.

Arjuna had said 'I am terror-struck' (11/23) and 'I am terrified at heart' (11/24). So in response to Arjuna's feeling of terror, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Don't be terrified."

The Lord, revealed to him His cosmic form by being kind to him, so he should not be bewildered. Secondly, He was already pleased with him, so his request to seek His pleasure, was nothing else besides delusion; he should renounce this delusion. Thirdly, he said that his delusion had disappeared (11/1) but actually it had not disappeared. So he should renounce his delusion, and being fearless and pleased, should behold His divine form. As, there was no change* in Him, in all the circumstances, while driving his horses, or talking or revealing the cosmic form, he should also, not undergo any change, after beholding His cosmic form.

The Lord, further said to Arjuna that he was terrified and bewildered, because of his egoism, and mineness. It was sheer foolishness. So, he should be free from this foolishness. It is because of these wicked traits, a man wants to maintain perishable things and persons etc. But those having a spiritual inclination, behold the Lord pervading everywhere and so become fearless. Beholding the Nṛsīṁha (head of a lion and the body of a man) incarnation of the Lord, when even gods were terrified, Prahlaḍa, was not afraid because he beheld Him, pervading everywhere. So he fell at His feet and He took him to His lap, and began to lick him.

'Vyapetabhīḥ prīṭamanāḥ punastvaṁ tadeva me rūpamiḍaṁ prapaśya'—Arjuna, in the forty-fifth verse said, "My mind is confused by fear." So the Lord says to him, "Be fearless and have a complacent mind."

The Lord uses the term 'Punaḥ' (again), asking Arjuna to behold again, the same four-armed form, which he had seen in His cosmic body, and by the term 'Tadeva' and 'Idam' Lord indicates as you do not want to see this form alongwith the

* Though Arjuna finds change in him yet he thinks that the Lord is uniform and never undergoes any change. So he addresses Him as 'Acyuta' in the beginning, the middle and the end (Gītā 1/21, 11/42 and 18/73).

Brahmā, Śiva and frightful cosmic form therefore I manifest Myself in that four-armed form only and he should behold, that very form, very carefully.

How long did Sañjaya and Arjuna have that divine vision?—

Sañjaya was offered divine vision* by sage Vyāsa, when the war was going to be waged so that he could communicate the details of the war to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. But, when at the death of Duryodhana, Sañjaya was overwhelmed with grief, he lost his divine vision.†

When Arjuna requested Lord Kṛṣṇa, to reveal to him, His cosmic form, He bestowed upon him divine eyes (11/8) and Arjuna had a vision of His divine form and fearful form in His cosmic body. But beholding His malevolent form, Arjuna was terrified and offering his praises to Him, he said that he was affected by fear and so prayed to Him, to reveal to him his four-armed form. Then, He revealed to him first, His four-armed form and then the two-armed, human form. It proves, that Arjuna possessed divine vision upto the forty-ninth verse, because Arjuna in the fifty-first verse, says to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "Seeing this gentle human form of Yours, O Janārdana, I am now composed, and restored to my usual nature.

Now a doubt arises as to why Arjuna did not lose the faculty of divine vision, when he had been frightened and terrified (11/23-24). The clarification is, that by then Arjuna, was not too frightened to lose his divine vision. But, he is much frightened now and so being terrified, he bows to the Lord again and again, and prays to Him to reveal to him the divine form, with

* O king! Sañjaya will relate to you the details of the war. Everything of the battlefield will be visible to him. Sañjaya endowed with divine vision will become omniscient and will tell you the incident of the war (Mahā. Bhīṣma. 2/9-10).

† O sinless king! I am overwhelmed with grief at your son's departure to the heavenly abode and I have lost my divine vision bestowed upon me by sage Vyāsa (Mahā. Sautika. 9/62)

four-arms (11/45). It is here, that he loses divine vision.

Secondly, Arjuna had a keen desire to see His cosmic form (11/3). So Lord Kṛṣṇa vouchsafed divine vision to Arjuna but here he had no longing to behold His cosmic form, but being terrified, he longs to see His divine form, so there is no need of the divine eye. Thus, he loses divine vision.

If Sañjaya and Arjuna, had not been overwhelmed with grief and fear, they would have continued to possess the divine vision and seen more details. But, it was because of their grief and terror, that they lost their divine vision. Similarly, when a man out of delusion is attached to the world, he loses discrimination. As a greedy man, by losing discrimination commits deadly sins, such as thefts, robberies and even murders, but if he without being deluded, attaches due importance to discrimination, he himself will attain salvation, and will lead the world to salvation.

Appendix—Arjuna being non-plussed, humbly sought the Lord's pardon for his past misbehaviour—'tatksāmaye tvāmahamaprameyam' (11/42), so here the Lord says, "I may appear either in My serene form or frightening form, after all I am your friend. You were terrified, it was your delusion, it was a lack in friendship. All that is seen is My pastime. What is there to be terrified? In friendship, who is the high and who is the low."

God has revealed Himself in the form of the universe, therefore this universe is said to be the first incarnation at the beginning of the creation—'ādya'vatāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraśya' (Śrīmadbhā. 2/6/41). As God has incarnated Himself as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, so has He incarnated Himself as the universe. It has been called incarnation because in it God is objectively seen. At the time of incarnation though He seems to be worldly, yet He remains unworldly (divine) (Gītā 4/6). But He seems to be earthly to the ignorant people because of their own attachment and aversion (Gītā 7/24-25, 9/11).

It is God's will whether He reveals Himself in serene form or terrific form. If the scene is beautiful, where flowers are blooming and the atmosphere is full of fragrance, that is also the manifestation of God; and on the other hand if there is the scene where flesh, bones and waste matter are lying and that garbage is giving out stench—that is also the manifestation of God. There is nothing else besides God. God revealed Himself as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and He also revealed Himself as a fish, a tortoise and a wild boar. He may assume any form but He is certainly God. Whatever person or object is seen, that is the form of God and whatever action takes place, that is His pastime. If any person commits a sin or does injustice to other, it means that He is staging the human drama of Kali age. He plays according to the semblance he assumes.* If He assumes the form of an idol (arcāvatāra), He like an idol, acts by remaining immovable. It is not befitting for Him to perform an action as an idol but it is proper for Him not to perform any action, otherwise how will He remain an incarnation in the form of an idol? While assuming the form of a wild boar, He acts like a wild boar and when He incarnates as a man, He acts (behaves) like a man†. He may assume any form and may act accordingly but it does not affect devotees' hearts because they hold that there neither is, nor was, nor will be nor can be any other entity besides God.

The universe which we (the worldly people) see is not the cosmic form of God because the cosmic form is divine and imperishable while the universe which we see is material and perishable. As we see the material Vṛndāvana but within it don't see the divine Vṛndāvana, similarly we see the material (physical) universe, but within it the divine universe (cosmic form) is not seen to us. It's reason is the desire for pleasure. It is because of this desire for pleasure that inertness, materialism and impurity

* jathā aneka veṣa dhari nṛtya karai ṇaṭa koi

soi soi bhāva dekhāvai āpuna hoi na soi

(Mānasa, Uttara. 72 b)

† Vide the appendix to the fourth verse of the ninth chapter.

have prevailed in the universe. It is because of the desire for pleasure that there is attraction for the world. If this attraction is wiped out, then the whole world is divine cosmic form only.

On Self-realization the universe appears divine to a Jñānī, but it seems sweet (loving) to a devout devotee. Having seen it in the form of 'mādhurya' (sweet), as a man naturally loves his body, so does a devotee naturally loves all beings. But Arjuna saw the Lord's divine (glorious) cosmic form because he wanted to see the same form—'draṣṭumicchāmi te rūpamaiśvaraṁ puruṣottama' (11/3). In 'mādhurya' there is special lovingness and in 'aiśvarya' (glory) there is special influence. It means that the divine cosmic form in spite of being one, appears in numerous forms, according to the sentiment of a devotee and in spite of appearing in numerous forms, it remains one. Diversity is unity and unity is diversity is the Lord's singularity, unworldliness (divinity) and peculiarity.



Link:—In the next verse, Sañjaya described the Lord's four-armed divine form, which was revealed to Arjuna, as was promised to him, by the Lord, in the previous verse.

सञ्जय उवाच

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा
स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।
आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं
भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ॥ ५० ॥

sañjaya uvāca

ityarjunam vāsudevastathoktvā
svakam rūpaṁ darśayāmāsa bhūyaḥ
āśvāsayāmāsa ca bhītamenam
bhūtvā punaḥ saumyavapurmahātmā