

XI. The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form

Summary of Eleventh Discourse

Arjuna's doubts having been removed through a clear description of the nature of the Atman and the origin and destruction of all created things, he is now ready to behold the Cosmic Vision.

Krishna grants him the divine sight by means of which Arjuna beholds the Lord as the vast Cosmic Manifestation. The vision is at once all-comprehensive and simultaneous. In every direction Arjuna sees the Lord as the entire universe. All the created worlds, gods, beings, creatures and things stand revealed as the one gigantic body of the Lord.

Arjuna further sees that the great cosmic drama is set in motion and controlled by the all-mighty power of the Lord. His Will alone prevails in all things and actions, both good and bad. The Lord exhorts him to fight, he being only an apparent cause of the destruction of his enemies.

Arjuna is unable to bear the pressure of the sudden expansion of consciousness and is filled with fear. He begs the Lord to assume once more His usual form.

Krishna reiterates that this vision cannot be had through any amount of austerities, study, sacrifices or philanthropic acts. Supreme devotion is the only means by which one can have access to His grand vision.

Arjuna Uvaacha:

Madanugrahaaya paramam guhyamadhyaatmasamjnitar;
Yattwayoktam vachastena moho'yam vigato mama.

Arjuna said:

1. By this explanation of the highest secret concerning the Self, which Thou hast spoken out of compassion towards me my delusion is gone.

COMMENTARY: After hearing the glories of the Lord, Arjuna has an intense longing to have the wonderful Cosmic Vision.

Bhavaapyayau hi bhootaanaam shrutau vistarasho mayaa;
Twattah kamalapatraaksha maahaatmyamapi chaavyayam.

2. The origin and the destruction of beings verily have been heard by me in detail from Thee, O lotus-eyed Lord, and also Thy inexhaustible greatness!

Evametadyathaattha twamaatmaanam parameshwara;
Drashtumicchaami te roopamaishwaram purushottama.

3. (Now), O Supreme Lord, as Thou hast thus described Thyself, O Supreme Person, I wish to see Thy Divine Form!

*Manyase yadi tacchakyam mayaa drashtumiti prabho;
Yogeshwara tato me twam darshayaatmaanamavyayam.*

4. If Thou, O Lord, thinkest it possible for me to see it, do Thou, then, O Lord of the Yogis, show me Thy imperishable Self!

Sri Bhagavaan Uvaacha:

*Pashya me paartha roopaani shatasho'tha sahasrashah;
Naanaavidhaani divyaani naanaavarnaakriteeni cha.*

The Blessed Lord said:

5. Behold, O Arjuna, My forms by the hundreds and thousands, of different sorts, divine and of various colours and shapes!

*Pashyaadityaan vasoon rudraan ashwinau marutastathaa;
Bahoonyadrishtapoorvaani pashyaashcharyaani bhaarata.*

6. Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Asvins and also the Maruts; behold many wonders never seen before, O Arjuna!

*Ihaikastham jagatkritsnam pashyaadya sacharaacharam;
Mama dehe gudaakesha yachchaanyad drashtumicchasi.*

7. Now behold, O Arjuna, in this, My body, the whole universe centred in the one—including the moving and the unmoving—and whatever else thou desirest to see!

*Na tu maam shakyase drashtum anenaiva swachakshushaa;
Divyam dadaami te chakshuh pashya me yogamaishwaram.*

8. But thou art not able to behold Me with these, thine own eyes; I give thee the divine eye; behold My lordly Yoga.

COMMENTARY: No fleshy eye can behold Me in My Cosmic Form. One can see Me only through the eye of intuition or the divine eye. It should not be confused with seeing through the physical eye or through the mind. It is an inner divine experience attained through intense devotion and concentration.

Sanjaya Uvaacha:

*Evamuktwa tato raajan mahaayogeshwaro harih;
Darshayaamaasa paarthaaya paramam roopamaishwaram.*

Sanjaya said:

9. Having thus spoken, O king, the great Lord of Yoga, Hari (Krishna), showed to Arjuna His supreme form as the Lord!

*Anekavaktra nayanam anekaadbhuta darshanam;
Anekadivyaabharanam divyaaneekodyataayudham.*

10. With numerous mouths and eyes, with numerous wonderful sights, with numerous divine ornaments, with numerous divine weapons uplifted (such a form He showed).

*Divyamaalyaambaradham divyagandhaanulepanam;
Sarvaashcharyamayam devam anantam vishwatomukham.*

11. Wearing divine garlands and apparel, anointed with divine unguents, the all-wonderful, resplendent (Being), endless, with faces on all sides,

*Divi sooryasahasrasya bhavedyugapadutthitaa;
Yadi bhaah sadrishee saa syaadbhaasastasya mahaatmanah.*

12. If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out at once (simultaneously) in the sky, that would be the splendour of that mighty Being (great soul).

*Tatraikastham jagatkritsnam pravibhaktamanekadhaa;
Apashyaddevadevasya shareere paandavastadaa.*

13. There, in the body of the God of gods, Arjuna then saw the whole universe resting in the one, with its many groups.

*Tatah sa vismayaavishto hrishtaromaa dhananjayah;
Pranamya shirasaa devam kritaanjalirabhaashata.*

14. Then, Arjuna, filled with wonder and with hair standing on end, bowed down his head to the Lord and spoke with joined palms.

Arjuna Uvaacha:

*Pashyaami devaamstava deva dehe
Sarvaamstathaa bhootavisheshasanghaan;
Brahmaanameesham kamalaasanastha-
Mrisheemshcha sarvaanuragaamshcha divyaan.*

Arjuna said:

15. I behold all the gods, O God, in Thy body, and hosts of various classes of beings; Brahma, the Lord, seated on the lotus, all the sages and the celestial serpents!

*Anekabaahoodaravaktranetram
Pashyaami twaam sarvato'nantaroopam;
Naantam na madhyam na punastavaadim
Pashyaami vishweshwara vishwaroopa.*

16. I see Thee of boundless form on every side, with many arms, stomachs, mouths and eyes; neither the end nor the middle nor also the beginning do I see, O Lord of the universe, O Cosmic Form!

*Kireetinam gadinam chakrinam cha,
Tejoraashim sarvato deeptimantam;
Pashyaami twaam durnireekshyam samantaad
Deeptaanalaaarkadyutimaprameyam.*

17. I see Thee with the diadem, the club and the discus, a mass of radiance shining everywhere, very hard to look at, blazing all round like burning fire and the sun, and immeasurable.

*Twamaksharam paramam veditavyam
Twamasya vishwasya param nidhaanam;
Twamavyayah shaashwatadharmagoptaa
Sanaatanastwam purusho mato me.*

18. Thou art the Imperishable, the Supreme Being, worthy of being known; Thou art the great treasure-house of this universe; Thou art the imperishable protector of the eternal Dharma; Thou art the ancient Person, I deem.

*Anaadimadhyaatmanantaveeryam
Anantabaahum shashisooryanetram;
Pashyaami twaam deeptahutaashavaktram
Swatejasaa vishwamidam tapantam.*

19. I see Thee without beginning, middle or end, infinite in power, of endless arms, the sun and the moon being Thy eyes, the burning fire Thy mouth, heating the entire universe with Thy radiance.

*Dyaavaaprithivyoridamantaram hi
Vyaaptam twayaikena dishashcha sarvaah;
Drishtwaa'dbhutam roopamugram tavedam
Lokatrayam pravyathitam mahaatman.*

20. The space between the earth and the heaven and all the quarters are filled by Thee alone; having seen this, Thy wonderful and terrible form, the three worlds are trembling with fear, O great-souled Being!

*A mee hi twaam surasanghaah vishanti
Kechid bheetaah praanjalayo grinanti;
Swasteetyuktwaam maharshisiddhasanghaah
Stuvanti twaam stutibhih pushkalaabhih.*

21. Verily, into Thee enter these hosts of gods; some extol Thee in fear with joined palms: "May it be well." Saying thus, bands of great sages and perfected ones praise Thee with complete hymns.

*Rudraadityaa vasavo ye cha saadhyaa
Vishwe'shvinau marutashchoshmapaashcha;
Gandharvayakshaasurasiddhasanghaa
Veekshante twaam vismitaashchaiva sarve.*

22. The Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, Sadhyas, Visvedevas, the two Asvins, Maruts, the manes and hosts of celestial singers, Yakshas, demons and the perfected ones, are all looking at Thee in great astonishment.

*Roopam mahat te bahuvaktranetram
Mahaabaaho bahubaahoorupaadam;
Bahoodaram bahudamshttraakaraalam
Drishtwaa lokaah pravyathitaastathaa'ham.*

23. Having beheld Thy immeasurable form with many mouths and eyes, O mighty-armed, with many arms, thighs and feet, with many stomachs, and fearful with many teeth, the worlds are terrified and so am I!

*Nabhahsprisham deeptamanekavarnam
Vyaattaananam deeptavishaalanetram;
Drishtwaa hi twaam pravyathitaantaraatmaa
Dhritim na vindaami shamam cha vishno.*

24. On seeing Thee (the Cosmic Form) touching the sky, shining in many colours, with mouths wide open, with large, fiery eyes, I am terrified at heart and find neither courage nor peace, O Vishnu!

*Damshtraakaraalaani cha te mukhaani
Drishtwaiva kaalaanalasannibhaani;
Disho na jaane na labhe cha sharma
Praseeda devesha jagannivaasa.*

25. Having seen Thy mouths, fearful with teeth, blazing like the fires of cosmic dissolution, I know not the four quarters, nor do I find peace. Have mercy, O Lord of the gods! O abode of the universe!

*A mee cha twaam dhritaraashtrasya putraah
Sarve sahaivaavanipaalaasanghaih;
Bheeshmo dronah sootaputrastathaa'sau
Sahaasmadeeyairapi yodhamukhyaih.*

26. All the sons of Dhritarashtra with the hosts of kings of the earth, Bhishma, Drona and Karna, with the chief among all our warriors,

*Vaktraani te twaramaanaa vishanti
Damshtraakaraalaani bhayaanakaani;
Kechidwilagnaa dashanaantareshu
Sandrishyante choornitairuttamaangaih.*

27. They hurriedly enter into Thy mouths with terrible teeth and fearful to behold. Some are found sticking in the gaps between the teeth, with their heads crushed to powder.

*Yatha naddeenaam bahavo'mbuvegaah
Samudramevaabhimukhaah dravanti;
Tatha tavaamee naralokaveeraah
Vishanti vaktraanyabhivijwalanti.*

28. Verily, just as many torrents of rivers flow towards the ocean, even so these heroes of the world of men enter Thy flaming mouths.

COMMENTARY: Arjuna sees all the warriors, whom he did not wish to kill, rushing to death. He knows now that the Lord has already destroyed them, so why should he worry about the inevitable.

*Yatha pradeeptam jwalanam patangaa
Vishanti naashaaya samriddhavegaah;*

*Tathaiva naashaaya vishanti lokaas
Tavaapi vaktraani samriddhavegaah.*

29. As moths hurriedly rush into a blazing fire for (their own) destruction, so also these creatures hurriedly rush into Thy mouths for (their own) destruction.

*Lelihyase grasamaanah samantaal
Lokaan samagraan vadair jwaladbhih;
Tejobhiraapoorya jagatsamagram
Bhaasastavograah pratapanti vishno.*

30. Thou lickest up, devouring all the worlds on every side with Thy flaming mouths. Thy fierce rays, filling the whole world with radiance, are burning, O Vishnu!

*Aakhyaaahi me ko bhavaanugraroopo
Namo'stu te devavara praseeda;
Vijnaatumicchaami bhavantamaadyam
Na hi prajaanaami tava pravrittum.*

31. Tell me, who Thou art, so fierce in form. Salutations to Thee, O God Supreme! Have mercy; I desire to know Thee, the original Being. I know not indeed Thy doing.

Sri Bhagavaan Uvaacha:

*Kaalo'smi lokakshayakrit pravriddho
Lokaan samaahartumiha pravrittah;
Rite'pi twaam na bhavishyanti sarve
Ye'wasthitaah pratyaneekeshu yodhaah.*

The Blessed Lord said:

32. I am the mighty world-destroying Time, now engaged in destroying the worlds. Even without thee, none of the warriors arrayed in the hostile armies shall live.

*Tasmaat twam uttishtha yasho labhaswa
Jitwaa shatroon bhungkshwa raajyam samriddham;
Mayaivaite nihataah poorvameva
Nimittamaatram bhava savyasaachin.*

33. Therefore, stand up and obtain fame. Conquer the enemies and enjoy the unrivalled kingdom. Verily, they have already been slain by Me; be thou a mere instrument, O Arjuna!

*Dronam cha bheeshmam cha jayadratham cha
Karnam tathaa'nyaanapi yodhaveeraan;
Mayaa hataamstwam jahi maa vyathishthaa
Yudhyaswa jetaasi rane sapatnaan.*

34. Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and all the other courageous warriors—these have already been slain by Me; do thou kill; be not distressed with fear; fight and thou shalt conquer thy enemies in battle.

Sanjaya Uvaacha:

*Etacchrutwaa vachanam keshavasya
Kritaanjalirvepamaanah kireetee;
Namaskritwaa bhooya evaaha krishnam
Sagadgadam bheetabheetah pranamya.*

Sanjaya said:

35. Having heard that speech of Lord Krishna, the crowned one (Arjuna), with joined palms, trembling, prostrating himself, again addressed Krishna, in a choked voice, bowing down, overwhelmed with fear.

Arjuna Uvaacha:

*Sthaane hrisheekesha tava prakeertyaa
Jagat prahrishyatyayanurajyate cha;
Rakshaamsi bheetaani disho dravanti
Sarve namasyanti cha siddhasanghaah.*

Arjuna said:

36. It is meet, O Krishna, that the world delights and rejoices in Thy praise; demons fly in fear to all quarters and the hosts of the perfected ones bow to Thee!

*Kasmaachcha te na nameran mahaatman
Gareeyase brahmano'pyaadikartre;
Ananta devesha jagannivaasa
Twamaksharam sadasattatparam yat.*

37. And why should they not, O great soul, bow to Thee who art greater (than all else), the primal cause even of (Brahma) the creator, O Infinite Being! O Lord of the gods! O abode of the universe! Thou art the imperishable, the Being, the non-being and That which is the supreme (that which is beyond the Being and non-being).

COMMENTARY: The Lord is Mahatma. He is greater than all else. He is the imperishable, so He is the proper object of worship, love and delight.

*Twamaadidevah purushah puraanas
Twamasya vishwasya param nidhaanam;
Vettaasi vedyam cha param cha dhaama
Twayaa tatam vishwamanantaroopa.*

38. Thou art the primal God, the ancient Purusha, the supreme refuge of this universe, the knower, the knowable and the supreme abode. By Thee is the universe pervaded, O Being of infinite forms!

*Vaayuryamo'gnirvarunah shashaankah
Prajaapatistwam prapitaamahashcha;
Namo namaste'stu sahasrakritwah
Punashcha bhooyo'pi namo namaste.*

39. Thou art Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, the moon, the creator, and the great-grandfather. Salutations, salutations unto Thee, a thousand times, and again salutations, salutations unto Thee!

*Namah purastaadatha prishthataste
Namo'stu te sarvata eva sarva;
Anantaveeryaamitavikramastwam
Sarvam samaapnoshi tato'si sarvah.*

40. Salutations to Thee from front and from behind! Salutations to Thee on every side! O All! Thou infinite in power and prowess, pervadest all; wherefore Thou art all.

*Sakheti matwaa prasabham yaduktam
He krishna he yaadava he sakheti;
Ajaanataa mahimaanam tavedam
Mayaa pramaadaat pranayena vaapi.*

41. Whatever I have presumptuously uttered from love or carelessness, addressing Thee as O Krishna! O Yadava! O Friend! regarding Thee merely as a friend, unknowing of this, Thy greatness,

*Yachchaavahaasaartham asatkrito'si
Vihaarashayyaasanabhojaneshu;
Eko'thavaapyachyuta tatsamaksham
Tatkshaamaye twaamaham aprameyam.*

42. In whatever way I may have insulted Thee for the sake of fun while at play, reposing, sitting or at meals, when alone (with Thee), O Achyuta, or in company—that I implore Thee, immeasurable one, to forgive!

*Pitaasi lokasya charaacharasya
Twamasya poojyashcha gururgareeyaan;
Na twatsamo'styabhyadhikah kuto'nyo
Lokatraye'pyapratinaprabhaava.*

43. Thou art the Father of this world, unmoving and moving. Thou art to be adored by this world. Thou art the greatest Guru; (for) none there exists who is equal to Thee; how then can there be another superior to Thee in the three worlds, O Being of unequalled power?

*Tasmaatpranamya pranidhaaya kaayam
Prasaadaye twaamahameeshameedyam;
Piteva putrasya sakheva sakhyyuh
Priyah priyaayaarhasi deva sodhum.*

44. Therefore, bowing down, prostrating my body, I crave Thy forgiveness, O adorable Lord! As a father forgives his son, a friend his (dear) friend, a lover his beloved, even so shouldst Thou forgive me, O God!

*Adrishtapoortvam hrishito'smi drishtwaa
Bhayena cha pravyathitam mano me;
Tadeva me darshaya deva roopam
Praseeda devesha jagannivaasa.*

45. I am delighted, having seen what has never been seen before; and yet my mind is distressed with fear. Show me that (previous) form only, O God! Have mercy, O God of gods! O abode of the universe!

*Kireetinam gadinam chakrahastam
Icchaami twaam drashtumaham tathaiva;
Tenaiva roopena chaturbhujena
Sahasrabaaho bhava vishwamoorte.*

46. I desire to see Thee as before, crowned, bearing a mace, with the discus in hand, in Thy former form only, having four arms, O thousand-armed, Cosmic Form (Being)!

Sri Bhagavaan Uvaacha:

*Mayaa prasannena tavaarjunedam
Roopam param darshitamaatmayogaat;
Tejomayam vishwamanantamaadyam
Yanme twadanyena na drishtapoortvam.*

The Blessed Lord said:

47. O Arjuna, this Cosmic Form has graciously been shown to thee by Me by My own Yogic power; full of splendour, primeval, and infinite, this Cosmic Form of Mine has never been seen before by anyone other than thyself.

*Na vedayajnaadhyayanairna daanair
Na cha kriyaabhirna tapobhirugraih;
Evam roopah shakya aham nriloke
Drashtum twadanyena karupraveera.*

48. Neither by the study of the *Vedas* and sacrifices, nor by gifts, nor by rituals, nor by severe austerities, can I be seen in this form in the world of men by any other than thyself, O great hero of the Kurus (Arjuna)!

*Maa te vyathaa maa cha vimoodhabhaavo
Drishtwaa roopam ghorameedringmamedam;
Vyapetabheeh preetamanaah punastwam
Tadeva me roopamidam prapashya.*

49. Be not afraid nor bewildered on seeing such a terrible form of Mine as this; with thy fear entirely dispelled and with a gladdened heart, now behold again this former form of Mine.

Sanjaya Uvaacha:

*Ityarjunam vaasudevastathoktwaa
Swakam roopam darshayaamaasa bhooyah;
Aashwaasayaamaasa cha bheetamenam
Bhootwaa punah saumyavapurmaatmaa.*

Sanjaya said:

50. Having thus spoken to Arjuna, Krishna again showed His own form; and the great soul (Krishna), assuming His gentle form, consoled him who was terrified (Arjuna).

Arjuna Uvaacha:

*Drishtwedam maanusham roopam tava saumyam janaardana;
Idaaneemasmii samvrittah sachetaah prakritim gatah.*

Arjuna said:

51. Having seen this Thy gentle human form, O Krishna, now I am composed and restored to my own nature!

Sri Bhagavaan Uvaacha:

*Sudurdarshamidam roopam drishtavaanasi yanmama;
Devaapasya roopasya nityam darshanakaangkshinah.*

The Blessed Lord said:

52. Very hard indeed it is to see this form of Mine which thou hast seen. Even the gods are ever longing to behold it.

*Naa ham vedairna tapasaa na daanena na chejyayaa;
Shakya evamvidho drashtum drishtavaanasi maam yathaa.*

53. Neither by the *Vedas*, nor by austerity, nor by gift, nor by sacrifice, can I be seen in this form as thou hast seen Me (so easily).

*Bhaktyaa twananyayaa shakyam aham evamvidho'rjuna;
Jnaatum drashtum cha tattwena praveshtum cha parantapa.*

54. But by single-minded devotion can I, of this form, be known and seen in reality and also entered into, O Arjuna!

*Matkarmakrinmatparamo madbhaktah sangavarjitah,
Nirvairah sarvabhooteshu yah sa maameti paandava.*

55. He who does all actions for Me, who looks upon Me as the Supreme, who is devoted to Me, who is free from attachment, who bears enmity towards no creature, he comes to Me, O Arjuna!

COMMENTARY: This is the essence of the whole teaching of the *Gita*. He who practises this teaching attains supreme bliss and immortality. Such a one realises Him and enters into His Being, becoming completely one with Him. This verse contains the summary of the entire *Gita* philosophy.

*Hari Om Tat Sat
Iti Srimad Bhagavadgeetaasoapanishatsu Brahmavidyaayaam
Yogashaastre Sri Krishnaarjunasamvaade
Vishwaroopo Darshanayogo Naama Ekaadasho'dhyaayah*

Thus in the *Upanishads* of the glorious *Bhagavad Gita*, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the eleventh discourse entitled:

"The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form"
