

Chapter 11 (Of the Manifesting of the One and Manifold)

Chapter 11: Of the Manifesting of the One and Manifold

Arjuna. This, for my soul's peace, have I heard from Thee,

The unfolding of the Mystery Supreme

Named Adhyatman; comprehending which,

My darkness is dispelled; for now I know —

O Lotus-eyed! — whence is the birth of men,

And whence their death, and what the majesties

Of Thine immortal rule. Fain would I see,

As thou Thyself declar'st it, Sovereign Lord!

The likeness of that glory of Thy Form

Wholly revealed. O Thou Divinest One!

If this can be, if I may bear the sight,

Make Thyself visible, Lord of all prayers!

Show me Thy very self, the Eternal God!

Krishna. Gaze, then, thou Son of Pritha! I manifest for thee

Those hundred thousand thousand shapes that clothe my Mystery:

I show thee all my semblances, infinite, rich, divine,

My changeful hues, my countless forms. See! in this face of mine,

Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Aswins, and Maruts; see

Wonders unnumbered, Indian Prince! revealed to none save thee.

Behold! this is the Universe! — Look! what is live and dead

I gather all in one — in Me! Gaze, as thy lips have said

On GOD, ETERNAL, VERY GOD! See ME! what thou prayest!

Thou canst not! — nor, with human eyes, Arjuna! ever mayest!

Therefore I give thee sense divine. Have other eyes, new light!

And, look! This is My glory, unveiled to mortal sight!

Sanjaya. Then, O King! to God, so saying,
Stood, to Pritha's Son displaying
All the splendour, wonder, dread
Of His vast Almighty-head.
Out of countless eyes beholding,
Out of countless mouths commanding,
Countless mystic forms enfolding
In one Form: supremely standing
Countless radiant glories wearing,
Countless heavenly weapons bearing,
Crowned with garlands of star-clusters,
Robed in garb of woven lustres,
Breathing from His perfect Presence
Breaths of every subtle essence
Of all heavenly odours; shedding
Blinding brilliance; overspreading —
Boundless, beautiful — all spaces
With His all-regarding faces;
So He showed! If there should rise
Suddenly within the skies
Sunburst of a thousand suns
Flooding earth with beams undeemed-of,
Then might be that Holy One's
Majesty and radiance dreamed of!
So did Pandu's Son behold
All this universe enfold

All its huge diversity
Into one vast shape, and be
Visible, and viewed, and blended
In one Body — subtle, splendid,
Nameless — th' All-comprehending
God of Gods, the Never-Ending
Deity!
But, sore amazed,
Thrilled, o'erfilled, dazzled, and dazed,
Arjuna knelt; and bowed his head,
And clasped his palms; and cried, and said:
Arjuna. Yea! I have seen! I see!
Lord! all is wrapped in Thee!
The gods are in Thy glorious frame! the creatures
Of earth, and heaven, and hell
In Thy Divine form dwell,
And in Thy countenance shine all the features
Of Brahma, sitting lone
Upon His lotus-throne;
Of saints and sages, and the serpent races
Ananta, Vasuki;
Yea! mightiest Lord! I see
Thy thousand thousand arms and breasts, and faces,
And eyes, — on every side
Perfect, diversified;
And nowhere end of Thee, nowhere beginning,
Nowhere a centre! Shifts —

Wherever soul's gaze lifts —
Thy central Self, all-wielding, and all-winning!
Infinite King! I see
The anadem on Thee,
The club, the shell, the discus; see Thee burning
In beams insufferable,
Lighting earth, heaven, and hell
With brilliance blazing, glowing, flashing; turning
Darkness to dazzling day,
Look I whichever way;
Ah, Lord! I worship Thee, the Undivided,
The Uttermost of thought,
The Treasure-Palace wrought
To hold the wealth of the worlds; the Shield provided
To shelter Virtue's laws;
The Fount whence Life's stream draws
All waters of all rivers of all being:
The One Unborn, Unending:
Unchanging and Unblending!
With might and majesty, past thought, past seeing!
Silver of moon and gold
Of sun are glories rolled
From Thy great eyes; Thy visage, beaming tender
Throughout the stars and skies,
Doth to warm life surprise
Thy Universe. The worlds are filled with wonder

Of Thy perfections! Space
Star-sprinkled, and void place
From pole to pole of the Blue, from bound to bound,
Hath Thee in every spot,
Thee, Thee! — Where Thou art not,
O Holy, Marvellous Form! is nowhere found!
O Mystic, Awful One!
At sight of Thee, made known,
The Three Worlds quake; the lower gods draw nigh Thee;
They fold their palms, and bow
Body, and breast, and brow,
And, whispering worship, laud and magnify Thee!
Rishis and Siddhas cry
"Hail! Highest Majesty!
From sage and singer breaks the hymn of glory
In dulcet harmony,
Sounding the praise of Thee;
While countless companies take up the story,
Rudras, who ride the storms,
Th' Adityas' shining forms,
Vasus and Sadhyas, Viswas, Ushmapas;
Maruts, and those great Twins
The heavenly, fair, Aswins,
Gandharvas, Rakshasas, Siddhas, and Asuras, —
These see Thee, and revere
In sudden-stricken fear;
Yea! the Worlds, — seeing Thee with form stupendous,

With faces manifold,
With eyes which all behold,
Unnumbered eyes, vast arms, members tremendous,
Flanks, lit with sun and star,
Feet planted near and far,
Tushes of terror, mouths wrathful and tender; —
The Three wide Worlds before Thee
Adore, as I adore Thee,
Quake, as I quake, to witness so much splendour!
I mark Thee strike the skies
With front, in wondrous wise
Huge, rainbow-painted, glittering; and thy mouth
Opened, and orbs which see
All things, whatever be
In all Thy worlds, east, west, and north and south.
O Eyes of God! O Head!
My strength of soul is fled,
Gone is heart's force, rebuked is mind's desire!
When I behold Thee so,
With awful brows a-glow,
With burning glance, and lips lighted by fire
Fierce as those flames which shall
Consume, at close of all,
Earth, Heaven! Ah me! I see no Earth and Heaven!
Thee, Lord of Lords! I see,
Thee only — only Thee!

Now let Thy mercy unto me be given,
Thou Refuge of the World!
Lo! to the cavern hurled
Of Thy wide-opened throat, and lips white-tushed,
I see our noblest ones,
Great Dhritarashtra's sons,
Bhishma, Drona, and Karna, caught and crushed!
The Kings and Chiefs drawn in,
That gaping gorge within;
The best of both these armies torn and riven!
Between Thy jaws they lie
Mangled full bloodily,
Ground into dust and death! Like streams down-driven
With helpless haste, which go
In headlong furious flow
Straight to the gulping deeps of th' unfilled ocean,
So to that flaming cave
Those heroes great and brave
Pour, in unending streams, with helpless motion!
Like moths which in the night
Flutter towards a light,
Drawn to their fiery doom, flying and dying,
So to their death still throng,
Blind, dazzled, borne along
Ceaselessly, all those multitudes, wild flying!
Thou, that hast fashioned men,
Devourest them again,

One with another, great and small, alike!
The creatures whom Thou mak'st,
With flaming jaws Thou tak'st,
Lapping them up! Lord God! Thy terrors strike
From end to end of earth,
Filling life full, from birth
To death, with deadly, burning, lurid dread!
Ah, Vishnu! make me know
Why is Thy visage so?
Who art Thou, feasting thus upon Thy dead?
Who? awful Deity!
I bow myself to Thee,
Namostu Te, Devavara! Prasad!
O Mightiest Lord! rehearse
Why hast Thou face so fierce?
Whence doth this aspect horrible proceed?
Krishna. Thou seest Me as Time who kills,
Time who brings all to doom,
The Slayer Time, Ancient of Days, come hither to consume;
Excepting thee, of all these hosts of hostile chiefs arrayed,
There stands not one shall leave alive the battlefield! Dismayed
No longer be! Arise! obtain renown! destroy thy foes!
Fight for the kingdom waiting thee when thou hast vanquished those.
By Me they fall — not thee! the stroke of death is dealt them now,
Even as they show thus gallantly; My instrument art thou!
Strike, strong-armed Prince, at Drona! at Bhishma strike! deal

death

On Karna, Jyadratha; stay all their warlike breath!

'Tis I who bid them perish! Thou wilt but slay the slain;

Fight! they must fall, and thou must live, victor upon this plain!

Sanjaya. Hearing mighty Keshav's word,

Trembling that helmed Lord

Clasped his lifted palms, and — praying

Grace of Krishna — stood there, saying,

With bowed brow and accents broken,

These words, timorously spoken:

Arjuna. Worthily, Lord of Might!

The whole world hath delight

In Thy surpassing power, obeying Thee;

The Rakshasas, in dread

At sight of Thee, are sped

To all four quarters; and the company

Of Siddhas sound Thy name.

How should they not proclaim

Thy Majesties, Divinest, Mightiest?

Thou Brahm, than Brahma greater!

Thou Infinite Creator!

Thou God of gods, Life's Dwelling-place and Rest.

Thou, of all souls the Soul!

The Comprehending Whole!

Of being formed, and formless being the Framer;

O Utmost One! O Lord!

Older than eld, Who stored

The worlds with wealth of life! O Treasure-Claimer,
Who wottest all, and art
Wisdom Thyself! O Part
In all, and All; for all from Thee have risen
Numberless now I see
The aspects are of Thee!
Vayu Thou art, and He who keeps the prison
Of Narak, Yama dark;
And Agni's shining spark;
Varuna's waves are Thy waves. Moon and starlight
Are Thine! Prajapati
Art Thou, and 'tis to Thee
They knelt in worshipping the old world's far light,
The first of mortal men.
Again, Thou God! again
A thousand thousand times be magnified!
Honour and worship be —
Glory and praise, — to Thee
Namo, Namaste, cried on every side;
Cried here, above, below,
Uttered when Thou dost go,
Uttered where Thou dost come! Namo! we call;
Namostu! God adored!
Namostu! Nameless Lord
Hail to Thee! Praise to Thee Thou One in all;
For Thou art All! Yea, Thou!

Ah! if in anger now
Thou shouldst remember I did think Thee Friend,
Speaking with easy speech,
As men use each to each;
Did call Thee "Krishna," "Prince," nor comprehend
Thy hidden majesty,
The might, the awe of Thee;
Did, in my heedlessness, or in my love,
On journey, or in jest,
Or when we lay at rest,
Sitting at council, straying in the grove,
Alone, or in the throng,
Do Thee, most Holy! wrong,
Be Thy grace granted for that witless sin
For Thou art, now I know,
Father of all below,
Of all above, of all the worlds within
Guru of Gurus; more
To reverence and adore
Than all which is adorable and high!
How, in the wide worlds three
Should any equal be?
Should any other share Thy Majesty?
Therefore, with body bent
And reverent intent,
I praise, and serve, and seek Thee, asking grace.
As father to a son,

As friend to friend, as one
Who loveth to his lover, turn Thy face
In gentleness on me!
Good is it I did see
This unknown marvel of Thy Form! But fear
Mingles with joy! Retake,
Dear Lord! for pity's sake
Thine earthly shape, which earthly eyes may bear!
Be merciful, and show
The visage that I know;
Let me regard Thee, as of yore, arrayed
With disc and forehead-gem,
With mace and anadem,
Thou that sustainest all things! Undismayed
Let me once more behold
The form I loved of old,
Thou of the thousand arms and countless eyes!
This frightened heart is fain
To see restored again
My Charioteer, in Krishna's kind disguise.
Krishna. Yea! thou hast seen, Arjuna! because I loved thee well,
The secret countenance of Me, revealed by mystic spell,
Shining, and wonderful, and majestic, manifold,
Which none save thou in all the years had favour to behold;
For not by Vedas cometh this, nor sacrifice, nor alms,
Nor works well-done, nor penance long, nor prayers, nor chanted

psalms,

That mortal eyes should bear to view the Immortal Soul unclad,

Prince of the Kurus! This was kept for thee alone! Be glad!

Let no more trouble shake thy heart, because thine eyes have seen

My terror with My glory. As I before have been

So will I be again for thee; with lightened heart behold!

Once more I am thy Krishna, the form thou knew'st of old!

Sanjaya. These words to Arjuna spake

Vasudev, and straight did take

Back again the semblance dear

Of the well-loved charioteer;

Peace and joy it did restore

When the Prince beheld once more

Mighty BRAHMA'S form and face

Clothed in Krishna's gentle grace.

Arjuna. Now that I see come back, Janardana!

This friendly human frame, my mind can think

Calm thoughts once more; my heart beats still again!

Krishna. Yea! it was wonderful and terrible

To view me as thou didst, dear Prince! The gods

Dread and desire continually to view!

Yet not by Vedas, nor from sacrifice,

Nor penance, nor gift-giving, nor with prayer

Shall any so behold, as thou hast seen!

Only by fullest service, perfect faith,

And uttermost surrender am I known

And seen, and entered into, Indian Prince!

Who doeth all for Me; who findeth Me
In all; adoreth always; loveth all
Which I have made, and Me, for Love's sole end,
That man, Arjuna! unto Me doth wend.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER XI OF THE
BHAGAVAD-GITA,

Entitled "Viswarupadarsanam,"

Or "The Book of the Manifesting of the
One and Manifold."