



**The Yoga of the vision of the  
cosmic form:  
Teachings from Chapter 11 of the  
Bhagavad Gita**

# Chapter 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 (see notes below), he is now ready to behold the Cosmic Vision.

Notes:

**Verse 10.20. I am the Self, O Gudakesha, seated in the hearts of all beings! I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.**

**Commentary:** O Gudakesha! I am the soul (Pratyagatma) which exists in the hearts of all beings and I am also the source or origin, the middle or stay, and the end of all created beings. I am the birth, the life and the death of all beings. Meditate on me as the innermost self.

Godakesha means either 'conqueror of sleep or thick-haired'.

He who is able to meditate on the self with Abhedha Bhavana (attitude of non-duality), is a qualified aspirant (Adhikari) of the first class.

Brahman is the truth of every thought - cognition (vritti-jnanam), not an object of cognition, not one of the many objects, the One truth in all the many. The invariable consciousness in all variable vrittis.

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.

Notes:

**Verse 3.5. Verily none can ever remain for even a moment without performing action; for, everyone is made to act helplessly indeed by the qualities born of Nature.**

**Commentary:** The *Gun*as (qualities of Nature) are three, viz., Sattva, Rajas, Tamas. Sattva is harmony or light or purity; Rajas is passion or motion; Tamas is inertia or darkness. Sattvic action help a man to attain to Moksha. Rajasic and Tamasic actions bind a man to Samsara.

These qualities cannot affect a man who has knowledge of the Self. he has crossed over these qualities. He has become Gunatita (one who has transcended the qualities of Nature).

The ignorant man who has no knowledge of the Self and who is swayed by Avidya or nescience is driven helplessly to action by the *Gun*as. (Cf. IV. 16, XVIII. 11)

**Sarvadharmān parityajya maamekam sharanam vraja;  
Aham twā sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maa shuchah.**

**Ch. 18. V 66: Abandoning all duties, take refuge in me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not.**

**Commentary:** This is the answer given by the Lord to the question put by Arjuna in chapter 2, verse 7 "I ask Thee which may be better; tell me decidedly. I am Thy disciple, suppliant to Thee; teach me."

(the complete verse is: My heart is overpowered by the taint of pity, my mind is confused as to duty. I ask Thee: tell me decisively what is good for me. I am Thy disciple. Instruct me who has taken refuge in Thee.)

**All Dharmas:** Righteous deeds, including Adharma; all actions, righteous and unrighteous, as absolute freedom from all actions is intended to be taught here.

**Taking refuge in me alone** implies the knowledge of unity without any thought of duality; knowing that there is nothing else except Me, the Self of all, dwelling the same in all. If thou art established in this faith, I shall liberate thee from all sins, from all bonds of Dharma and adharma by manifesting Myself as thy own Self.

To behold forms is the Dharma of the eye. The support or substratum of all forms is Brahman. When you look at an object behold Brahman Which is the one essence and abandon the form as it is illusory and unreal. Have the same attitude towards the other objects which pertain to the other senses. (This is called Abheda Bodha Vakhya - or eliminating name and form - seeing that the object is my own Self in this form.)

Give up the Jiva-Dharma (the notions: "I am the doer of actions. I enjoy. I am a Brahmana. I am a Brahmachari. I am endowed with a little knowledge and power, etc." and get yourself established in Brahma-Bhavana (the understanding or knowledge "I am Brahman"). This is what is meant by taking refuge in Lord Krishna, according to the Vedantins.

Work ceaselessly for the Lord but surrender the fruits of all your actions to the Lord. Take the Lord as your sole refuge. Live for Him. Work for Him. Serve Him in all forms. Think of Him only. Meditate on Him alone. See Him everywhere. Worship Him in your heart. Consecrate your life, all actions, feelings and thoughts to the Lord. You will rest in Him. You will attain union with Him. You will attain immortal supreme peace and eternal bliss. This is the view of another school of thought.

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.

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*Arjuna Uvaacha:*  
*Madanugrahaaya paramam guhyamadhyaatmasamjnitam;*  
*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 vision of the Cosmic Form with his own eyes. His bewilderment and delusion have now vanished.

Adhyatma: That which treats of the discrimination between the Self and the not- Self; metaphysics.

I was worried about the sin involved in killing my relations and preceptors. I had the ideas, "I am the agent in killing them; they are to be killed by me."

This delusion has vanished now after receiving Thy most profound and valuable instructions. Thou hast dispelled this delusion of ignorance from me.

The vision of the Cosmic Form is not the ultimate goal. If that were so, the Gita would have ended with this chapter. The vision of the Cosmic Form is also one more in a series of graded experiences. It is a terrible experience too. That is the reason why Arjuna said to the Lord, stammering with fear: "What an awful form Thou hast! I have seen that which none hath seen before. My heart is glad, yet faileth me on account of fear. Show all the worlds, let me see Thy form with the diadem, and with the mace and discuss in Thy hands. Again I wish to see Thee as before; assume Thy four- armed form, O Lord of thousand arms and of forms innumerable."

Arjuna heard the Lord's statement, viz., "Having pervaded this whole universe with one fragment of Myself, I remain." This induced him to have the vision of the Lord's Cosmic Form. He says, "O Lord of compassion, Thou hast taught me the spiritual wisdom which can hardly be found in the Vedas. Thou hast saved me. My delusion has disappeared. Thou hast disclosed to me the nature of the Supreme Self, the secrets of Nature and Thy divine glories. My greatest ambition at the present moment is that I should behold with my own eyes Thy entire Cosmic Form."

*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!

**Commentary:** Kamalapatraksha: Lotus- eyed or having eyes like lotus- petals. Kamalapatra also means knowledge of the Self. He who can be obtained by knowledge of the Self is Kamalapatraksha.

*Evametadyathaatha 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!

**Commentary:** Some commentators take the two halves of this verse as two independent sentences and interpret it thus:

“So it is, O Supreme Lord, as Thou hast declared Thyself to be. (But still) I desire to see Thy form as Isvara, O Supreme Person.”

Rupamaisvaram: Thy form as Isvara, that of Vishnu as possessed of infinite knowledge, sovereignty, power, strength, prowess and splendour.

*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!

**Commentary:** Arjuna is very keen and eager to see the Cosmic Form of the Lord. He prays to Him to grant him the vision. This supreme vision can be granted only through His grace.

Yogesvara also means the Lord of Yoga. A Yogi is one who is endowed with the eight psychic powers (Siddhis). The Lord of Yogins is Yogesvara. And, Yoga is identity of the individual soul with the Absolute. He who is able to bestow this realisation of identity on the deserving spiritual aspirant is Yogesvara.

He who is able to create, preserve, destroy, veil and graciously release is the Lord. (These five actions, Panchakriyas, are known respectively as Srishti, Sthiti, Samhara, Tirodhana and Anugraha.)

*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!

**Commentary:** Divyani: Divine; supernatural.

Satasah, Sahasrasah: By the hundreds and thousands--- countless.

O Arjuna, I want you to behold the Cosmic Form. All beings and entities are there. The fat and the lean, the short and the tall, the red and the black, the active and the passive, the rich and the poor, the intelligent and the dull, the healthy and the sick, the noisy and the silent, those that are awake, those that are asleep, the beautiful and the ugly, and all grades of beings with their distinctive marks are all there. The blueness of the sky, the yellowness of the silk, the redness of the twilight, the blackness of the coal, the whiteness of the snow, and the greenness of the leaves will be seen by you. You will also behold the objects of various 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!

**Commentary:** Adityas, Vasus, Rudras and Maruts have already been described in the previous chapter.

Not these alone! Behold also many other wonders never seen before by you or anybody else in this world.

*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!

**Commentary:** Anyat: Other; whatever else. Your success or defeat in the war, about which you have entertained a doubt. (Cf.II.6)

*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 fleshly eyes can behold Me in My Cosmic Form. One can see it through the divine eye or the eye of intuition. It should not be confused with seeing through the eye or the mind. It is an inner experience.

Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: "I give thee the divine eye, by which you will be able to behold My sovereign form. By it see My marvellous power of Yoga."

Anena: With this: the fleshly eye or the physical eye, the earthly eye. (Cf VII.25; IX. 5;X.7)

*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!

**Commentary:** King: This verse is addressed by Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra.  
Supreme Form: Cosmic Form

*Anekavaktra nayanam anekaadbhuta darshanam;  
Anekadivyaabharanam divyaanekodyataayudham.*

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

**Commentary:** Countless faces appeared there. Arjuna looked at this Cosmic Form in all its magnificence. He saw the Lord everywhere and in everything. The whole manifestation appeared as one gigantic body of the Lord. He saw the Lord as all- in- all.

*Divyamaalyaambaradharam 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,

**Commentary:** Visvatomukham: With faces on all sides, as He is the Self of all beings.

Devam: God. Also means 'resplendent.'

Anantam: Endless. He who is free from the three kinds of limitations, viz., Desa-Kala-Vastu-Pariccheda (limitations of space, time and thing, respectively) is Anantam. He is Brahman. This philosophical concept is explained below.

The pot is here. This is space- limitation. The pot is now here. This is time- limitation. The pot is not a cloth. This is thing (material) limitation. There is saffron in Kashmir only. This is limitation of space and thing. You can have apples only in September. This is limitation of time and thing. But Brahman is everywhere, as It is all- pervading. It exists in the past, the present, and the future. It dwells in all parts. Hence, It is beyond all these limitations. It is therefore endless.

*Divi sooryasahasrasya bhavedyugapadutthitaa;  
Yadi bhaah sadrishee saa syadbhaasastasya 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).

**Commentary:** Divi here means in the Antariksha or the sky.

Mahatma here refers to the great Soul or the mighty Being, the Cosmic Form.

*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.

**Commentary:** Tatra: There-- in the Cosmic Form.

Anekadha: Many groups--- gods, manes, men and other species of beings.

Arjuna beheld all forms as the forms of the Lord, all heads as His heads, all eyes and His eyes, all hands as His hands, all feet as His feet, every body as the limb of the Lord's divine form. Wherever he looked he beheld nothing but the Lord. He got mystic divine knowledge.

Sanjaya has given a truly graphic description of the Cosmic Form. Yet, it would be futile to grasp it with the finite mind. It is a transcendental vision, beyond the reach of the mind and senses. It has to be realised in Samadhi.

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

**Commentary:** Tatah: Then, having seen the Cosmic Form.

Arjuna joined his palms in order to do prostration to the Cosmic Firm. The great hero had attained true humility which the bowed head and joined palms represented, and which is the essential ingredient of devotion.

*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!

**Commentary:** Arjuna describes his own experience of the Cosmic Form in this and the following verses, 15 to 31.

Bhutaavisheshasanghan: Hosts of various classes of beings, both animate and inanimate. These numerous entities are Thy Cosmic Form, like hairs on the human body.

Brahma, the four- faced, the Lord of all creatures, is seated in the center of the earth-lotus on the Meru which forms the thalamus as it were on the earth- lotus.

Sages, such as Vasishtha. Serpents, such as Vasuki.

*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!

**Commentary:** A thing that is limited by space and time has a beginning, a middle, and an end, but the Lord is omnipresent and eternal. He exists in the three periods of time-- past, present



and future, but is not limited by time and space. Therefore He has neither a beginning nor middle nor end.

Arjuna could have this divine vision only with the help of the divine eye bestowed upon him by the Lord. He who has supreme devotion to the Lord and on whom the Lord showers His grace can enjoy this wondrous vision.

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

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.

**Commentary:** Kiritam is a special ornament for the head, the crown.

Arjuna had worshipped the Lord as having a crown, club and discus and the Lord showed him the same form now. He is in all forms and He is beyond all forms as the transcendental Reality. Who can comprehend His glory?

Tejorasim: A mass of splendour that cannot be perceived without the inner divine eye of intuition.

Aprameyam: Immeasurable, whose limits cannot be fixed.

I infer from the vision of Thy power of Yoga that Thou are the Imperishable, etc.

*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.

**Commentary:** Visvasya- Nadhaanam: Treasure- house of this universe, also means 'abode' or 'refuge' or the substratum of this universe. It is because of this that all the beings in the universe are preserved and protected. He is the inexhaustible source to Whom the devotee turns at all times. Deluded indeed are they that ignore this divine treasure- house and run after the shadow of the objects of the senses which do not contain even an iota of pleasure.

Veditavyam: To be known by the aspirants or seekers of liberation, through Sravana (hearing of the scriptures), Manana (reflection) and Nididhyasana (meditation).

Avyayah means inexhaustible, unchanging, undying.

*Anaadimadhyaantamanantaveeryam*

*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.

**Commentary:** Anantabahu: Having endless arms. This denotes that the multiplicity of His limbs are endless.

*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!

**Commentary:** Thee: In Thy Cosmic Form.

The space and the quarters: This denotes that the Lord has filled the whole universe of animate and inanimate objects.

In order to remove the doubt entertained by Arjuna as to his success (Cf. II.6) Lord Krishna makes him feel now that victory for the Pandavas is certain.

*Amee hi twaam surasanghaah vishanti  
Kechid bheetaah praanjalayo grinanti;  
Swasteetyuktvaa 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.

**Commentary:** Pushkalabhih means complete or well- worded praises or praises full of deep meanings.

Great sages like Narada and perfected ones like Kapila praise Thee with inspiring hymns.

*Rudraadityaa vasavo ye cha saadhya  
Vishwe'shvinau marutashchoshmapaashcha;  
Gandharvayakshaasurasiddhasanghaah  
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.

**Commentary:** Sadhyas are a class of gods whom Brahma is the chief.

Visvedevas are ten gods who in vedic times were considered as protectors of human beings. They were called guardians of the world. They were givers of plenty to the human beings. Their names are: Kratu, Daksha, Vasu, Satya, Kama, Kala, Dhvani, Rochaka, Adrava and Pururava.

The two Asvins. born of Prabha (light), daughter of Tushta and the sun, are the physicians of the gods.

Rudras, Adityas, Vasus and Maruts--- see tenth chapter, verses 21 and 23.

Ushmapa: A class of manes. They accept the food offered in the Sraaddha (anniversary) ceremony or the obsequies, while it is hot. Hence they are called Usmapas. There are seven groups of manes.

Gandharvas are celestial singers such as Haha and Huhu.

Yakshas such as Kubera (the god of wealth); Asuras such as Virochana; perfected ones such as Kapila.

*Roopam mahat te bahuvaaktranetram  
Mahaabaaho bahubaahoorupaadam;  
Bahoodaram bahudamshtraakaraalam  
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!

**Commentary:** Lokah: The worlds--- all living beings in the world.

Here is the cause of my fear. Arjuna describes below the nature of the Cosmic Form which has caused terror in his heart.

*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!

**Commentary:** Dhriti also means patience and strength. Sama also means control. The vision of the Cosmic Form has frightened Arjuna considerably.

*Damshtraakaraalaani cha te mukhaani  
Drishtwaiva kaalaanalsannibhaani;  
Disho na jaane na labhe cha sharma  
Praseeda devasha 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!

**Commentary:** *Jagannivasa:* The substratum of the universe.

*Kalanala:* The fires which consume the worlds during the final dissolution of the worlds (Pralaya). Time (Kala) is the consumer of all that is manifest.

*Diso na jane:* I do not know the four quarters. I cannot distinguish the East from the West, nor the North from the South.

*Amee cha twaam dhritaraashtrasya putraah  
Sarve sahaivaavanipaalasanghah;  
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,

**Commentary:** Karna, though he was the son of Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas, was brought up by a charioteer and hence came to be regarded as his son.

*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.

**Commentary:** How do they enter into the mouth? Arjuna continues...

*Yathaa nadeenaam bahavo'mbuvegaah  
Samudramevaabhimukhaah dravanti;  
Tathaa 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:** *Ami:* These warriors such as Bhishma. Arjuna is now seeing all these warriors whom he did not wish to kill, rushing to death. His delusion has vanished. He thinks now: "This battle cannot be avoided. It has the sanction of the Supreme Lord. Why should I worry about the inevitable? The Lord has already destroyed these warriors. I am only an instrument in His hands. No sin can touch me even if I kill them. This is a just cause also."

Sri Ramana Maharshi:

"The Ordainer controls the fate of souls in accordance with their past deeds, their prarabdha karma. Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try how hard you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to stop it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is for one to be quiet."

Why and how they enter? Arjuna says...

*Yathaa 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 vadanair jwaladbhiih;  
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!

**Commentary:** *Vishnu* means all- pervading, Vyapanasila.

From Adi Shankaracharya's commentary to the Vishnu sahasranama:

*Vishnu:* When the question arises who is it that has become Vishvam, the all, the answer is given that it is Vishnu as he pervades everything he is called Vishnu. The term Vishnu is derived from the root vish indicating presence everywhere.

*Vishvam:* The All. he whom the Upanishads indicate by the passage yata sarvani bhutani is the cause of the generation sustenance and dissolution of the universe. He is Brahman the non-dual Supreme Being. The term vishva meaning the all or the whole manifested universe indicates him, both in relation to his adjunct of the universe and without it. As the universe has no existence apart from him he can be called vishvam, or the universe

*Aakhyaahi me ko bhavaanugraroopo*

*Namo'stu te devavara praseeda;  
Vijnaatumicchaami bhavantamaadyam  
Na hi prajaanaami tava pravrittim.*

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 pravridhho  
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.

**Commentary:** *Even without thee:* Even if thou, O Arjuna, wouldst not fight, these warriors are doomed to die under My dispensation. I am the all-destroying Time. I have already slain them. You have seen them dying, Therefore thy instrumentality is not of much importance.

Such being the case, therefore, stand up and obtain fame.

*Tasmaat twam uttishtha yasho labhaswa  
Jitwaa shatroom 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!

**Commentary:** Be thou merely an apparent or nominal cause. I have already killed them in advance. I have destroyed them long ago.

*Fame:* People will think that Bhishma, Drona and the other great warriors whom even the gods cannot kill have been defeated by you and so you will obtain great fame. Such fame is due to virtuous Karma only.

*Saturn:* Enemies such as Duryodhana.

*Savyasachi:* Arjuna who could shoot arrows even with the left hand.

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.

**Commentary:** *Already slain by Me:* Therefore, O Arjuna, you need not be afraid of incurring sin by killing them.

Drona had celestial weapons. He was Arjuna's teacher in the science of archery. He was Arjuna's beloved and greatest guru. Bhishma also possessed celestial weapons. He could die only if and when he wanted to die. He once fought single-handed with Lord Parasurama and was not defeated. So Powerful was he.

The father of Jayadratha performed penance with a resolve: "the head of the man who may cause the head of my son to fall on the ground, shall also fall." During the war, however, Arjuna's arrow cuts the head and drops it on the lap of the father who, inadvertently, makes it fall on the ground: he too dies at once. Karna, the son of the Sun-god, had obtained an unerring missile from Indra.

*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.

**Commentary:** When anyone is in a state of extreme terror or joy he sheds tears on account of pain or exhilaration of spirits. Then his throat is choked and he stammers or speaks indistinctly or in a dull, choked voice. Arjuna was extremely frightened when he saw the Cosmic Form and so he spoke in a stammering tone.

There is great significance in Sanjaya's words. He thought that Dhritarashtra might come to terms or make peace with the Pandavas when he knew that his sons would certainly be killed for want of proper support when Drona and Karna would be killed by Arjuna. He hoped that consequently there would be peace and happiness to both the parties. But Dhritarashtra was obstinate; he did not listen to this suggestion on account of the force of destiny.

*Arjuna Uvaacha:*

*Sthaane hrisheekesha tava prakeertyaa*

*Jagat prahrishyatanurajyate 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!

**Commentary:** *Praise:* description of the glory of the Lord. The Lord is the object worthy of adoration, love and delight, because He is the Self and friend of all beings.

The Lord is the object of adoration, love and delight for the following reason also. He is the primal cause even of Brahma, the Creator of the universe.

*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.

That which exists in the three periods of time is Sat. Brahman is Sat. That which does not exist in the three periods of time is Asat. This world is Asat. This body is Asat.

The words Sat and Asat mean here the manifested and the unmanifested which form the adjuncts of the Akshara (Imperishable). In reality the Akshara transcends both these. The word *Akshara* is applied in the Gita sometimes to the Unmanifest (Nature) and sometimes to the Supreme Being.

Arjuna again praises the Lord thus...

*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!

**Commentary:** *Primal God*, because the Lord is the creator of the universe.

*Purusha*, because the Lord lies in the body (Puri Sayanat).

*Nidhaanam:* That in which the world rests during the great deluge or cosmic dissolution.



The pot comes out of the clay and gets merged in clay. Even so the world has come out of the Lord and gets dissolved or involved in the Lord. So the Lord is the material cause of the world. Therefore, He is the primal God and the supreme refuge also.

*Vetta*: Knower of the knowable things. As the Lord is omniscient, He knows all about the world, and He is the instrumental or the efficient cause of this world.

*Param Dhama*: Supreme Abode of Vishnu. Just as the rope (the substratum for the superimposed snake) pervades the 'snake', so also Brahman or Vishnu through His Nature as Existence- Knowledge- Bliss Absolute pervades the whole universe.

*Vaayuryamo'gnirvarunah shashaankah  
Prajaapatistwam prapitaamashcha;  
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!

**Commentary:** *Prajapati*: Marichi and others were the seven mind- born sons of Brahma. Kasyapa descended from Marichi and from Kasyapa came all other progeny. Therefore, Marichi, Kasyapa and others are known as Prajapatis or the gods of progeny. The word *Prajapati* here is interpreted by some as Kasyapa and others Prakapatis. But as the word has been used here in the singular number it is appropriate to take Brahma as Prajapati. Brahma is the grandfather (Pitamaja) of Kasyapa. Brahma or the Hiranyagarbha is the Karya Brahman (effect). Isvara is the Karana Brahman (the cause for Brahma). Therefore, Isvara is the great- grandfather. He is the father of even Brahma.

Isvara has Maya as the limiting adjunct. Maya is His casual body. Isvara has no plane. Maya is an undifferentiated state. She is a state where the qualities of Nature (Gunas) are in equilibrium. When the equilibrium is distributed through the will of Isvara, the three Gunas, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva manifest.

*Thou art the moon* alludes to and includes the sun also.

*Punah, Bhuyah*: Again. Salutations a thousand times and again salutations. This indicates that Arjuna had intense faith in and boundless devotion for Lord Krishna. He was not satisfied even if he prostrated himself a thousand times.

*Namah purastadatha 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.

**Commentary:** The words “I prostrate myself before Thee, behind Thee and on every side” indicate the all- pervading nature of the Lord. How can the all- pervading Self have front and back? Finite objects only have front and back sides! Arjuna imagined that there were front and back sides to the Lord and so prostrated himself in his extreme faith and devotion.

*O All:* Nothing exists without Thee. As the Self is all- pervading, He is called the All. There is nothing except the Self.

*On every side,* as Thou art present everywhere or in all quarters.

One may be powerful but may not possess the courage to kill the enemies or he may be endowed with a mild form of courage; but the Lord is infinite in courage and infinite in power.

*Pervadest* by Thy One Self.

*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!

**Commentary:** Arjuna, beholding the Cosmic Form of Lord Krishna, seeks forgiveness for his past familiar conduct. He says, “I have been stupid. I have treated Thee with familiarity, not knowing Thy greatness. I have taken Thee as my friend on account of misconception. I have behaved badly with Thee. Thou art the origin of this universe and yet I have joked with Thee. I have taken undue liberties with Thee. Kindly forgive me, O Lord.”

*Tat:* All those offences

*Achyuta:* He who is unchanging.

*In company:* In the presence of others

*Aprameyam:* Immeasurable. He Who has unthinkable glory and splendour.

*Pitaasi lokasya charaacharasya*

*Twamasya poojyashcha gururgareeyaan;  
Na twatsamo'styabhyadhikah kuto'nyo  
Lokatraye'pyapratimaprabhaava.*

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?

**Commentary:** *There exists none who is equal to Thee:* There cannot be two or more Isvaras. If there were, the world will not get on as it does now. All the Isvaras may not be of one mind, as they would all be independent of one another. What one wishes to create, another may wish to destroy!

When there does not exist one who is equal to Thee, how could there be one superior to Thee?

*Father:* Creator. As the Lord is the creator of this world He is fit to be adored. He is the greatest Guru also. Therefore there is no one who is equal to the Lord.

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!

**Commentary:** O Lord, take me to Thy bosom as a mother does her child. Forgive me for all that I have hitherto spoken or done. Forgive my faults. Please overlook my past mistakes. I have done this through ignorance. Now I have come to Thee in submission. I beg Your pardon now.

*Adrishtapoorvam 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!

**Commentary:** For an ordinary man the Cosmic Form (Vision) is overwhelming and terrifying, but for a Yogi it is encouraging, strengthening and soul-elevating.

Arjuna says: "The Cosmic Form was never before seen by me. Show me only what form which Thou wearest as my friend."

*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)!

**Commentary:** Arjuna says: “O Lord in the Cosmic Form! I do not know where to turn and to whom to address myself. I am frightened. I am longing to see Thee with conch, discus, mace and lotus, Withdraw Thy Cosmic Form, Assume that same four- armed form as before.”

Spiritual aspirants are often impatient to have the highest spiritual experiences immediately (when) they begin their Sadhana. This is wrong. They will not be able to withstand the great power that will surge into them. Be patient!

*O thousand- armed* refers to the Cosmic Form.

*Sri Bhagavaan Uvaacha:*

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

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.

**Commentary:** Lord Krishna eulogises the Cosmic Form because Arjuna should be regarded to have achieved all his ends by seeing this Cosmic Form.

It is also an inducement to all spiritual aspirants to strive to attain this sublime vision. What they should do is explained by the Lord in verses 53 to 55.

*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)!

**Commentary:** Mere cramming of the texts of the *Vedas* without knowing the meaning will not do. A study of the sacrifices also is necessary. One should know the meaning of these, also.

*Dan*: Charity such as a *Tula Purusha* (gift of gold equal in weight of a man); *Kanyadana* (gift of one's daughter in marriage), gift of a cow, rice, etc.

*Kriya*: Rituals such as Agnihotra

*Tapas*: Such as the Chandrayana Vrata. (This is a kind of Vrata or observance. The daily consumption of food is reduced by one mouthful every day for the dark half of the month beginning with the full-moon. Then the food is increased by one mouthful every day during the bright fortnight during the 'increase' of the moon. This Vrata (observance) is a great purifier of the mind. It destroys sins.)

*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.

**Commentary:** *Former Form* is the form with four hands with conch, discus, club or mace and lotus.

The Lord saw Arjuna in a state of terror. Therefore, He withdrew the Cosmic Form and assumed His usual gentle form. He consoled Arjuna and spoke sweet, loving words.

*Sanjaya Uvaacha:*

*Ityarjunam vaasudevastathoktwaa*

*Swakam roopam darshayaamaasa bhooyah;*

*Aashwaasayaamaasa cha bheetamenam*

*Bhootwaa punah saumyavapurmahaatmaa.*

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).

**Commentary:** *His own form*: His form as the son of Vasudeva.

*Arjuna Uvaacha:*

*Drishtwedam maanusham roopam tava saumyam janaardana;*

*Idaaneemasmi 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!

**Commentary:** Arjuna says to Lord Krishna: “O Lord, I now behold Thy human form. Now my thoughts are collected and I am serene. I can speak. My senses perform their proper functions. My fear has vanished. Thou hast treated me as a mother would treat her erring child whom she embraces and nurses. Just as the calf rejoices when it beholds its mother who was missing for some days, so also I rejoice now when I behold Thy gentle form. I have drunk the nectar. Now I am alive.”

*Sri Bhagavaan Uvaacha:*

*Sudurdarshamidam roopam drishtavaanasi yanmama;  
Devaa apyasya 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.

**Commentary:** Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: “Thought the gods long to behold the Cosmic Form yet they have not seen it as you have done. They can never behold it.”

Just as the Chataka (a bird) longs for a drop of rain, eagerly turning its eyes towards the clouds, so also do gods yearn to behold the Cosmic Form but their wishes have not been gratified even in their dreams. Such is that marvellous vision which thou hast easily seen.

*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).

**Commentary:** This Cosmic Form which thou hast seen so easily cannot be obtained either by the study of the Vedas and the six modes of philosophy, nor by the practice of manifold austerities (penances), nor by charity, nor by sacrifices of various kinds.

Arjuna was indeed very fortunate in seeing the Cosmic Form.

How can the Lord be seen? Listen! The heart must be overflowing with the true devotion to Him. (Cf. XI.48)

*Bhaktyaa twananyayaa shakyam aham evamvidho' rjuna;  
Jnaatum drashtum cha tattvena 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!

**Commentary:** Devotion is the sole means to the realisation of the Cosmic Form.

*Ananya- Bhakti*: Single- minded devotion. One- pointed unbroken devotion; the devotion which does not seek any other object but the Lord alone. In this type of devotion no object other than the Lord is experienced by any of the senses. Egoism and dualism totally vanish.

*Of this form* refers to the Cosmic Form.

By single- minded devotion it is possible not only to know Me as declared in the scriptures but also to realise Me, i.e., to attain liberation. The devotee realises that the Lord is all this and He alone is the ultimate Reality. When he gets this experience of illumination he gets merged in Him. (Cf. VIII.22; X.10)

*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 practices this teaching will attain Supreme Bliss and Immortality. This verse contains the summary of the entire philosophy of the Gita.

He who performs actions (duties) for the sake of the Lord, who consecrates all his actions to Him, who serves the Lord with his heart and soul, who regards the Lord as his supreme goal, who lives for Him alone, who works for Him alone, who sees the Lord in everything, who sees the whole world as the Cosmic Form of the Lord and therefore cherishes no feeling of hatred or enmity towards any creature even when great injury has been done by others to him, who has no attachment to love or wealth, children, wife, friends and relatives, and who seeks nothing else but the Lord, realises Him and enters into His Being. He becomes one with Him.

*Hari Om Tat Sat*

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgeetaasooapanishatsu Brahmavidyaayaam*

*Yogashaastre Sri Krishnaarjunasamvaade*

*Vishwaroopa 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”**