

VISHVAROOPA DARSHANA YOGA



**CLICK HERE
TO
LISTEN TO
THE
ENTIRE
CHAPTER-11
VERSES 1-55
OF
SHRIMAD
BHAGAVAD
GITA**

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The Summary of

Chapter 11

Vishvaroopā Darshana Yoga

(The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic/Universal Form)

(A) The Summary of Summary of Chapter 11:

In the previous four chapters, Lord Kṛiṣṇa established that the entire universe is a manifestation of God and, therefore, any glory in the creation belongs to God alone. Now, in this chapter, Arjuna appreciates this teaching and sees the universe as the very Lord. On hearing the Lord declaring that the entire universe is held in a mere fraction of His being, Arjuna is desirous of seeing with his own eyes the form of the Lord that so sustains the world system. Therefore, extolling the Lord and His teachings, Arjuna requests Him to

grant him a direct vision of His Cosmic Body. The vision of the Lord's cosmic form terrifies Arjuna. He pleads with Lord Krishna to resume His original form. Lord Krishna assumes His gentle form. Arjuna regains his composure when Krishna explains the difficulty in gaining the state of God-realization. He points out the way to reach the Supreme Being. The Lord tells him that all spiritual practices like study of scriptures, austerities, charity, performing sacrifices etc. by themselves cannot lead one to the Supreme. They will at the most make one an introvert. Thereafter, deep meditation only is the means to become one with the Absolute. A major part of this Chapter is solely devoted to a description of the Cosmic Body and praises offered by Arjuna to the Lord manifested in that form; hence it has been given the title Vishvaroopā Darshana Yoga, the Yoga of the Vision of the Universal Form.

(B) The Most Important Verses of Chapter 11:

Verse 12: *If a thousand suns were to blaze forth together in the sky, they would not match the splendor of that great form.*

Verse 16: *I see your infinite form in every direction, with countless arms, stomachs, faces, and eyes. O Lord of the universe, whose form is the universe itself, I do not see in you any beginning, middle, or end.*

Verse 55: *Those who perform all their duties for my sake, who depend upon me and are devoted to me, who are free from attachment, and are without malice toward all beings, such devotees certainly come to me.*

(C) The Verse-By-Verse Summary of Chapter 11:

The contents of the 55 verses of Chapter 11 can be divided into the following eight sections:

<u>The Topic</u>	<u>Verses</u>
1. Arjuna desires to see the universal form	01 to 04
2. Kṛishṇa grants the divine eye	05 to 08
3. Sañjaya's description of the universal form	09 to 14
4. Arjuna's description of the universal form: (first phase expressing wonder)	15 to 22
5. Arjuna's description of the universal form: (second phase expressing fear)	23 to 31
6. Kṛishṇa answers Arjuna's question	32 to 34
7. Arjuna's description of the universal form: (third phase expressing devotion)	35 to 45
8. Withdrawal of the universal form and glorification of devotion.....	46 to 55

1. Arjuna desires to see the universal form

In the first two verses (V1,2), Arjuna summarizes the entire teaching of Lord Kṛiṣṇa – the nature of *jīva* (predominantly discussed in the first six chapters) and the nature of God (predominantly discussed in the later four chapters). Though Arjuna has received the teaching, he is unable to appreciate the universal form due to some mental blocks. Hence, he prays to the Lord for the vision of the universal form of the Lord (V3, 4).

2. Kṛiṣṇa grants the divine eye:

Lord Kṛiṣṇa agrees to bless Arjuna with the vision of the universal form (V5-7). Since this is not possible to have such a vision with the ordinary eyes, Lord Kṛiṣṇa grants Arjuna the divine eye for this special purpose (V8). (It is to be noted that the universal form is not a special form of the Lord. It is the Lord as the universe. As such, it is available for all at all times. The Lord need not show it. Still we miss it because of our narrow outlook of the world. Once we refine our mind and look at the universe, we cannot miss the Lord. His stamp is there in all, from a blade of grass to the farthest star. Such a mind which is tuned to see the Lord is the divine eye behind the fleshy eyes. It is such an eye that Lord Kṛiṣṇa granted to Arjuna.)

3. Sañjaya's description of the universal form:

From the 9th to the 14th verse (V9-14), we get a description of the universal form from Sañjaya. He depicts the Lord as a person with all divine ornaments shining with the brilliance of a thousand suns risen together. (We should remember that this is a description of the world only, divinized by the change of outlook. Every exalted object in the creation should be taken as an ornament of the Lord.)

4. Arjuna's description of the universal form: (first phase expressing wonder):

From the 15th verse, we get Arjuna's appreciation of the universal form. (Arjuna goes through the various phases as he sees the universal form. The first response is one of wonder only.) Arjuna sees all beings in the cosmic body of the Lord. The sun and the moon are like his eyes. He sees the hands, legs, etc., of the people as those of the Lord. Now, the Lord's body with thousands of hands, legs, etc., appears without beginning, middle or end (V15-22).

5. Arjuna's description of the universal form: (second phase expressing fear):

Now Arjuna's attention is turned towards the mouth of the Lord which represents Time (Death). With blazing fire and protruding teeth, the Lord's mouth evokes terror in all, including Arjuna. Arjuna sees the entire world being scorched by this fire

(Time), while many are rushing towards the mouth of the Lord. Some are already inside the mouth and some are crushed between the teeth. All these cause great fear and confusion in Arjuna and he begins to doubt whether the Lord is a loving father or a terrible destroyer (V23-31). (This shows that Arjuna is still not able to see the Lord as a whole. He is able to accept 'birth' as part of the universe, but not 'death'. This partial outlook is the cause of fear and confusion. This is the second phase.)

6. *Kṛiṣṇa answers Arjuna's question:*

Then, the Lord clarifies that the fierce aspect also is Himself, manifesting as the Time-principle. When the time comes for people to die, the Lord finds the instruments to bring this about and Arjuna happens to be one of them in the hands of the Lord (V32-34).

7. *Arjuna's description of the universal form: (third phase expressing devotion):*

Having understood the Lord to be 'the cosmic-stage-manager', Arjuna surrenders to His Will and sings His glory (V34-45). (Now Arjuna appreciates the Lord as totality, the basis of creation-preservation-dissolution. In front of the Lord, everything else is insignificant. This appreciation makes him a devotee, seeking forgiveness for all his past omissions and commissions. Thus, the third phase is true devotion to the Lord, born out of right understanding).

8. *Withdrawal of the universal form and glorification of devotion:*

Arjuna is indeed happy to have this unique vision of the Lord. Still, one part of his mind is not able to accept the totality, especially the destructive aspect. So Arjuna requests the Lord to withdraw His form (V46). In the last nine verses (V47-55), we see the Lord withdrawing His universal form (i.e., the Lord takes away the divine eye that Arjuna enjoyed till now. Arjuna comes down to look at the world in his own private way.) The Lord praises devotion as a means to this cosmic vision. This universal form could be seen by Arjuna because of his devotion. Through devotion one can purify the mind, see the universal form, know the true nature of the Lord, and become one with the Lord. Hence, Lord Kṛiṣṇa tells Arjuna - "Do actions for My sake; be My devotee; keep Me as the ultimate goal; be detached (from the world); be free from hatred towards all. Such a person reaches Me."