

CHAPTER 11

|| THE UNIVERSAL FORM ||

Two sentiments have received a prominent place in the eleventh chapter, in which the universal form of God will be revealed to Partha. In this chapter, the marvelous sentiment has come as a guest in the home of the serene sentiment and other sentiments too will share the honour of being in their company. Is not the wedding festival also an occasion for the guests to show off their fine clothes and ornaments? In the same way, all sentiments are parading in the palanquin of the local language. But amongst them the serene and marvelous sentiments stand out prominently as if for the very eyes to drink in. They give an impression as if *Lord Vishnu* and *Lord Shankara* have come to meet each other. So these two sentiments have come together like the sun and the moon meeting on the new moon day (1-5). Just as the two rivers *Ganga* and *Yamuna* have mingled in the confluence at the holy place *Prayaga*, these two sentiments have come together in the eleventh chapter to form another *Prayaga*. Therefore, by hearing this chapter, the whole world attains purification. While these two streams in the form of these two sentiments are visible, the third stream *Saraswati* in the form of the *Gita* is hidden. O elders, know that we have here a confluence of three rivers. My *guru Nivrittinatha* has made proper arrangement for everyone to enter these holy waters through the door of the organ of hearing. *Shri Nivrittinatha*, the repository of righteousness, has broken the hard banks of the Sanskrit text and has constructed the easy steps of Marathi language. Now anybody may take a dip in this holy confluence with devotional love, and as one has the vision of *Vishnu* in the holy *Prayaga*, he may have a vision of the universal form here and renounce the world (6-10). Here all the sentiments have come to such full expression, that they have opened the kingdom of joy to the ears of mankind. Here both the serene and marvelous sentiments are present, but other sentiments too have been given due scope. Here, even though a little, the door of liberation has been opened.

This eleventh chapter is the resting-place of the Lord, since Arjuna is a leader among the fortunate persons, he has arrived here. But how can one say that he alone has come here? For as the import of the *Gita* has now been made available in the Marathi language, this bliss has come within the reach of everyone. Therefore, I entreat you, to give attention to me (11-15). I know that it is not proper that I should speak before this audience of holy men with such intimacy. But I would request you to treat me as your child. Don't we teach the parrot to speak and nod our heads in approval when it does so? Or does not a mother get her child to do something and then admire it when it is done? You yourselves have taught me to speak, and so please hear what you have taught. You have planted this sweet tree in the form of literary work and so it is for you to ensure its growth by sprinkling it with water in the form of attention. Then this tree will bear blossoms of poetic sentiments and yield a rich crop of spiritual meanings and thus because of your religious merit the world will be blessed with abundant happiness (16-20).

On this the holy men became favorably disposed to *Jnanadeva*, and said, 'We are delighted by your talk. Now tell us what Arjuna spoke'. Then *Jnanadeva*, disciple of *Nivritti*, said, "How can an ordinary mortal like me, express the deep meaning of Lord Krishna's conversation with

Arjuna? But I will do so, if you give me the power to clothe that meaning with words. Did not *Rama* take the help of monkeys who lived on forest leaves and kill *Ravana*, the king of *Lanka*? And did not Shri Krishna get the eleven divisions of the *Kaurava* army defeated, through single-handed Arjuna? Therefore no ordinary man can achieve what a mighty Lord can do. You holy men have the power to achieve it and so make me give utterance to the meaning of the *Gita*. I shall now tell you the true import of the *Gita*, which flowed from the mouth of Shri Krishna, the Lord of *Vaikuntha*. Pray, give me your attention (21-25).” Blessed is the *Gita*, which is spoken by the Supreme Self, which is the subject of the *Vedas*. How is it possible to describe the greatness of this *Gita*, which eludes even the intelligence of *Shri Shankara*? therefore, it is only proper to prostrate oneself before it with all devotion and love.

Now listen, how Arjuna acquainted Lord Krishna of his ardent desire to see His universal form. When he came to realize that God had assumed the form of the universe, he had an intense longing to have its direct revelation. But he felt somewhat embarrassed to request him to show His universal form which he had so far kept secret (26-30). He thought to himself “How can I press him to show me this universal form all of a sudden, even when none of His favorite devotees had done so? Even though I am intimate with him, am I as close to Him as His mother *Yashoda*? but she also dared not ask him this. Even though I have served the Lord as best as I could, could it equal the service, which is rendered to him by *Garuda*? but he too did not press the Lord to show him his universal form. Am I as close to him as sages like *Sanaka*? But even they, did not express to him their intense desire to see this vision. Now has the Lord more fondness for me than the cowherds and cowherdresses of *Gokul*? But he also confounded the people of *Gokula* by feigning to be a child. He suffered birth in the womb, on ten occasions for someone (*King Ambrisha*), but withheld from him his universal form (31-35). How could I then ask him all of a sudden to disclose his great secret? But if I do not ask him now, I shall feel not only ill at ease, but shall find it difficult to live. I shall now casually ask him about it, and then act according to his pleasure.” Thinking thus, he made bold to ask him now, but with some trepidation. But he did it so skillfully that the Lord in reply to his one or two questions, disclosed to him his universal form. O sages, the mere sight of the calf makes the cow stand up with a clatter. How will she then withhold her milk when the calf begins to suck it (36-40)? See for yourselves, how can the Lord, who rushed to the forest to protect the *Pandavas*, withhold his reply to the question of Arjuna? Lord Krishna is love incarnate, and this love had received the leaven of Arjuna’s love. It is, therefore, really surprising that they remained separate even after they were on the point of becoming one. The Lord acceded to the request of Arjuna and showed him the universal form. I shall describe this event from the very start, please listen.

Arjuna said:

1. *As a favour to me you have propounded the ultimate mystery called the Self, by which my delusion is gone.*

Then Arjuna said, “O gracious Lord, you have explained to me very clearly what is beyond speech. When the five gross elements get dissolved in *Brahman* and the Self and *Maya* become merged in you without leaving a trace, the form that you have, is your resting place (41-45). You have laid bare before me the secret of your heart, which you neither had nor even communicated to the *Vedas*. You imparted to me in a moment the knowledge of the Self for which *Lord Shiva* had renounced his riches and become an ascetic. But after attaining

you, how can I think myself as separate from you and speak thus? Truly you rescued me from the flood of delusion in which I was sunk upto my head. There is nothing in this world which is without you. But it is my great misfortune that I am talking to you, as if I am separate from you (46-50). I was entertaining the egoistic feeling that I am a person by name Arjuna and used to think the *Kauravas* to be my kinsmen. On top of that, I suffered from a bad dream that by slaying the *Kauravas*, I would commit sin and meet with a bad fate. At that very time, you woke me up, O Lord. I left the city of *Gandharvas* (divine singers) and was rushing to the mirage to slake my thirst. I was experiencing the sharp pangs of snakebite, although the snake was made of cloth only. I was also under the delusion of ignorance that I was dying. All credit to you that you rescued me from this delusion, like that of a lion who was duped into believing that the image which he saw in the well was a different lion, but was prevented from leaping into it. O Lord, you saved me from self-destruction (51-55).

I had resolved that even if the seven seas met to engulf the world or the whole world was submerged under water or the heavens fell in a crash, I would not face the eventuality of a war with my kith and kin. I was thus plunged headlong in the depths of obstinacy due to my uncontrollable self-conceit. It was nice that you were standing close to me at this time, otherwise who else could have rescued me? Although a non-entity, I thought myself to be somebody and considered the wrong men as my relations. I was possessed by this great madness, but you saved me from it. When we were on the point of being burnt in the house of lac, you rescued us from there. But then there was only danger to our body, but in this fire of delusion, there was a risk of the destruction of my very self (56-60). Just as demon *Hiranyakasha* had seized the earth in his armpit and hid him in the bottom of the sea, so my perverse obstinacy had smothered my reason in the abyss of delusion. It is through your power that this reason was restored to me, but for that you had to assume a second *boar incarnation*. This is indeed an incomprehensible feat; how can I describe it in words? I can only say that you have saved my life thereby. The trouble you took for me has not been wasted, and you have succeeded in destroying my ignorance. How can a person suffer from delusion, after he has received the graceful glance of your eyes, which are like lotuses blooming in the lake of bliss (61-65)? It would be improper to say so. How can the water of mirage quench the submarine fire? O merciful God, I have the innermost sanctuary of your grace and am now experiencing fully the knowledge of *Brahman*. Is it any wonder then, that my delusion is totally dispelled? O God, the merciful touch of your feet has brought about my salvation.

2. *For I have heard in detail from you, O lotus-eyed (Krishna) of the origin and dissolution of beings and also your eternal glory.*

O you, Supreme Lord, with lotus eyes and the splendour of ten million suns, I heard from your lips thus. You revealed to me the nature of *Prakriti*, from which all these beings originate and into which they become dissolved (66-70). Then after making a thorough inquiry into this *Prakriti*, you revealed the inner sanctuary of the Supreme Self. As the *Vedas* dressed themselves in your glory, the *Vedic* literature flourished and produced gems of religious truths. All this came about as they had taken refuge at your feet. Thus you revealed to me your supreme unfathomable glory, which is fit for self-realisation through recourse to all paths. One sees the sun as the clouds clear away or clear water as the moss is swept off. One can clasp the sandalwood tree after the serpent's coil round it is unwound or recover the treasure

buried underground after the spirit guarding it goes away. In the same way, the Lord has removed the *Prakriti*, which was screening the knowledge and united me with *Brahman*. So I am convinced about your power, but at the same time I have become possessed by an intense longing. If I were to feel shy of asking you about it, then whom else can I ask? Except you, who else is our refuge in this world? If the fish were to feel shy of remaining in water or the infant shrank from sucking at mother's breasts, how will it survive? Therefore, I wish to ask you about something, which is in my mind. No sooner had Arjuna said this, than the lord said to him 'Enough of this talk, speak out what you wish' (76-80).

3. *Even as you have declared yourself to be, O Supreme Lord, I desire to see your form Divine, O Supreme Person.*

Then Arjuna said, O Lord, your speech has given me assurance and contentment. By recourse to the universal form, you create this panorama of the world and dissolve it. You call it your original form and by resorting to it, you assume incarnations with two or four hands and descend to the world for performing God's work. Then after you have finished, you rest on the *Sea of Milk* and your work of incarnations in the form of the fish and tortoise, you resume this original form. Of this the *Upanishads* sing praises, and the *yogis* meditate upon it by turning the mind inwards. Sages like *Sanaka* remain embracing it in a mystic union (81-85). We have been hearing so much about it all these years. I am most eager, O Lord to see this universal form. Since you have pressed me to express my desire without any reserve. I tell you that this is the sole object of my desire. I long to see your universal form with my own eyes.

4. *If you think it possible, O Lord, for me to see then reveal to me, O Lord of Yoga, your imperishable Self.*

But, O Lord, I have another doubt. I do not know whether I possess the capacity to see your universal form. If you ask me why I do not know it, can a diseased person diagnose his own illness (86-90)? And, O God, when desire becomes strong, a man forgets his ability or a person who is thirsty, thinks that even the sea is not enough to quench his thirst. I am not stupefied by my intense longing and so do not know my limitations. Only a mother knows the ability of its child and so, O scorcher of the foes, you should judge my worthiness and show me your universal form. But show me this grace only if I am worthy of it; if not, decline it. O Lord, how can one please a deaf person by singing to him a melody consisting of the fifth note? Neither the cloud sends rain to satisfy the thirst of the *chataka* bird, but does it not while doing so pour it for the rest of the world? But if that rain falls on a rock, it runs to waste (91-95). The moonlight is meant for the *Chataka* bird, but it is not denied to others. But even that moonlight is of no avail to one without eyesight. But I am certain that you will reveal to me your universal form. For you always assume new forms for the wise and the ignorant. Your mercy knows no bounds; if you wish to bestow your grace, you do so without regard to one's merits. You gave even the holy gift of liberation to your enemies. Even though liberation is difficult to attain, it is at your beck and call and waits upon any soul at your bidding. The demons *Putana* had come to suckle you with her poisoned teats and kill you, but you rewarded her with blissful union with you along with sages such as *Sanaka* (96-100). O Lord, when the gods, sages and kings of the three worlds had gathered at the *Rajasuya* sacrifice, did not *Shishupala*, king of *Chedi*, rail at you and dishonour you? But you

installed such a hardened sinner in your blissful abode. And did the son of *Uttanpada* ever aspire for the position of the pole star? He had entered the forest woods to secure his rightful place on his father's lap, but you gave him a position of honour, beyond even that of the sun or the moon. You are thus the lone giver of assurance to the souls in distress. You granted liberation to *Ajamila* only because he had uttered your name *Narayana*, while calling his son at the time of death. You still wear as a decoration the footprint of sage *Bhrigu*, who had kicked you in the chest. And you hold in your hand the conch, which is the body of your enemy *Shankhasura* (101-105).

Thus you grant favour, even to those who cause injury to you and bestow unmerited grace on the evil doers. You went to *Bali* to ask for alms and became his door-keeper. When the harlot, who had never worshipped you or listened to those who sang your glory, called her parrot fondly by your name, you granted her a home in *Vaikuntha*. On the slightest pretext you make others come close to you. How then will you treat me differently? The wish-yielding cow by her plentiful milk gives relief to those in distress, how then can her calves suffer the pangs of hunger? So it will never happen that the Lord will not grant my request and will withhold from me his universal form. But my only request is that you should make me worthy of seeing it (106-110). If you are sure that I shall be able to see this revelation, you should fulfill my ardent wish. When Arjuna made this earnest entreaty, the Lord of six Divine attributes, could not contain himself. Then Arjuna and Lord Krishna appeared as if they were the monsoon and the cloud brimful with *ambrosial* grace or the spring and the cuckoo. More than the *Sea of Milk* in which rises high tide at the sight of the full moon, the Lord was overjoyed with redoubled affection for Arjuna, and in that state of ecstatic joy, he said aloud, "O Partha, see these unlimited forms of mine (111-115)." Arjuna had desired to see only one form of God, but the Lord revealed to him that the whole universe is his form. So unbounded is the generosity of the Lord that he bestows a gift thousand-fold of what a devotee desires. His deepest mystery, which was held back from the thousand-eyed *Shesha*, hidden from the *Vedas* and kept secret from his spouse *Lakshmi*, he disclosed to Arjuna. See how luck favoured *Partha*. Just as a person goes into the state of dream from the state of wakefulness and becomes all the things he sees in a dream, so Lord Krishna became the manifold universe (116-120). Then dropping his human form and tearing off the curtain of gross vision, he revealed his cosmic form in its full grandeur. Without even stopping to think whether Arjuna would be able to see this vision with his naked eyes, he said all at once in the ecstasy of love, 'Behold these forms of mine'.

The blessed Lord said:

5. *Behold O Partha, my forms in hundreds and thousands, various in kind and Divine and of various colours and shapes.*

O Arjuna, you asked Me to show you only one form. But what is the sense, if I reveal to you only that? You will see that My cosmic form contains the entire universe. Now see My Divine forms, some lean, some fat, some short, some tall, some stout, some slim, some boundless, some impetuous, some frank, some on the move, some quiet, some indifferent, some loving, some with sharp intelligence, (121-125) some careless, some careful, some beautiful, some grave, some generous, some close-fisted, some wrathful, some tranquil, some conceited, some quiet, some jolly, some noisy, some silent and some gentle, some greedy, some dispassionate,

some awake, some asleep, some contented, some distressed and some rejoicing, some unarmed, some armed, some dreadful, some friendly, some horrible, some strange, some lost in meditation, some interested in social work, some lovingly protective, some violently destructive and some mere onlookers (126-130), such are My varied and countless forms. Some of them are lustrous, some of variegated colours, some are like red-hot gold, some are of tawny colour, while some are scarlet like the sky at the time of the sunset, some are pretty as if the universe is bedecked with rubies, while some are of reddish colour like the morning sun. Some are bright like pure crystals, some blue like sapphires, some bright-yellow like shining gold, some of light complexion like the new clouds, some yellow like the *champaka* flowers, some green (131-135), some deep red like red-hot copper and some fair like the bright moon. So see these variegated forms of mine. Just as My colours are different, so I have also such beautiful shapes that even cupid has become coy and surrendered to me. Some have an attractive build, some have beautiful figures, as if we have here the treasure-house of the Goddess of love open. Some are plump and shapely, some are hideous; some are long-necked, some with huge heads and some gigantic. In this way I have such varied shapes that they cannot be counted and in each single organ of each one of My forms you shall see the whole universe (136-140).

6. *Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Ashvins and also the Maruts. Behold, O Bharata, many wonders, never seen before.*

When I open My eyes, the *Adityas* come into being and when I shut them, they get dissolved. From the hot breath of My mouth, the eight *Vasus* including Fire are produced. And when the ends of My eye-brows meet in anger, then from them spring eleven *Rudras*. From My gentle countenance arise innumerable Divine physicians (*Ashvini-kumaras*) and from My ears, winds. Thus from every one of my limbs, gods and *siddhas* come into being. See here these forms of Mine, which are boundless and huge (141-145). See for yourself these forms of Mine, of which the *Vedas* give a very indistinct description, which cannot be seen by Time during its brief life-span, of which even God *Brahma* could not fathom the depth, and of which the three *Vedas* had never heard the names. And after seeing them, then enjoy My marvelous Divine play and miraculous powers.

7. *Behold now the moving and stationary world, centered here wholly in this body of Mine, O Gudakesha, and whatever else you desire to see.*

O Partha, just as tender grass grows at the bottom of the wish-yielding tree, so you will see a universe coming out of every root of hair of My body. Like specks floating through the sunbeams entering through the windows of a house, myriad universes moving through every limb of My form will enter your ken. Behold the universe which has filled every limb of My form and if you wish to see anything beyond it (146-150), you should have no problem. You will be able to see at ease whatever you wish to see in My body. So said lovingly, Lord Krishna in his universal form. But when he cast his glance at Arjuna whether he saw his universal form or not, he found that he was sitting quiet. He was sitting as he was before, hoping to see his universal form.

8. *But you cannot see Me with just these eyes of yours. I give you the Divine sight; behold My Supreme Yoga.*

Then the Lord said to himself, "I see that his desire to see the universal form has not decreased,

nor does he seem to be delighted after seeing it. No doubt, I have revealed to him My universal form, but he does not see it." So saying, the Lord smiled and said, 'I showed you My universal form, but you are not looking at it' (151-155). On this, sharp-witted Arjuna said, "O Lord, whose fault is it? You gave the drink of moon-light to a crane, instead of a *chakora* bird. It is as if you are holding a mirror after cleansing it before a blind person, or singing a sweet melody to the deaf or giving the pollen of flowers to the toad (instead of a bee). Why then, are you cross that all that has gone waste? The *Shastras* declare that this universal form is imperceptible to the senses. If you place before my physical eyes what can be seen only by the eye of wisdom, how do you expect me to see it? I must, therefore, suffer mutely, as I cannot point out your failing in this regard." Hearing this, the Lord said, "I concede everything that you say (156-160). Before revealing my universal form, I should have given you the necessary capability to see it. But I forgot to do so in the ecstatic delight of My affection for you. If a creeper is planted in the soil without tilling it, it runs to waste. This is what happened in this case. I shall now endow you with the vision in order to let you see My Universal form. With the aid of that vision, you should see My universal form. With the aid of that vision, you should see the grandeur of My Yoga through experience." Thus spoke Lord Krishna, the Primeval Person, worthy of being adored by the whole world.

Sanjaya said:

9. *After saying this, O Shri Hari, the great Lord of Yoga, revealed to Partha his Supreme Divine form,*

Then *Sanjaya* said, "O paramount Ruler of the *Kurus*, this fact amazes me every now and then. Is there anyone more fortunate than goddess *Lakshmi* in all the three worlds (161-165)? Is there anyone on this earth except *Vedas*, which can describe the Supreme Self through the medium of signs? What can be deemed as true personal service belongs to *Shesha*, is it not so? Who is there, who can outdo *Garuda* in giving service throughout the day like a *yogi*? But the Lord overlooked all this and ever since their birth, the *Pandavas* alone shared his abundant love. Like an amorous person who is completely under the thumb of his beloved, Lord Krishna became subject to Arjuna among the *Pandavas*, so much so that even a tutored parrot would not speak nor a pet animal perform to the tune of its master. It amazes me how fate could become so propitious to Arjuna (166-170). He alone had the fortune of feasting his eyes on the grand vision of *Brahman*. See how the Lord ministers to his fondest wishes. The Lord bears silently his angry rebuffs and begins to pacify him if he is displeased. See how the Lord has become crazy after Arjuna. Great sages like *Shukracharya*, who had conquered the senses from their very birth, became his bards and sang rhapsodies of his amorous sports with cowherdresses in *Gokul*. O king, likewise, the Lord is the Supreme treasure in which the *yogis* become absorbed through meditation. It is, therefore, a wonder to me how he became so amenable to Arjuna." *Sanjaya* further added, "What is there to wonder at? Fate smiles at him who is chosen by Lord Krishna (171-175)." Then the God of gods said to Partha, "I shall now bestow upon you the Divine vision by which you will be able to see My entire universal form."

No sooner had the Lord uttered these words than the darkness of ignorance began to vanish. They were not mere words, but in truth the Lord had kindled spiritual lights to reveal to

Arjuna the grandeur of the universal form. Arjuna's eye of wisdom opened out widely on all sides in the flash of that Divine vision, and then the Lord revealed to him the grandeur of his cosmic form. This vision vouchsafed to Arjuna, seemed like an infinite ocean of which his incarnations are the mere tides or the rays of the sun before which the whole world looks like a mirage (176-180) or the eternal ground on which is painted as on a canvas, the whole creation. Once the Lord, while yet a child, had swallowed earth and angry *Yashoda*, his foster-mother, had caught hold of him to punish him. At that time, he uttered the words, 'I have not eaten the earth', in trepidation and opening his mouth to establish his innocence, he had shown the fourteen regions of the universe to *Yashoda*. Likewise when the Lord touched the cheek of *Dhruva* with his conch in the *Madhuvana*, he began to utter spiritual truths, which lay beyond the grasp of the *Vedas*. So, when Partha received the grace of *Shri Hari*, he could find no trace of *Maya* anywhere (181-185). In the splendour of the Divine creative power, he saw marvels everywhere and his mind was plunged in wonderment. Just as sage *Markandeya* was alone floating on the waters which had filled the world right upto *Satyaloka*, so Arjuna was now lost in the Divine play of the universal form. He said, 'What an immense expanse of sky was here! Who has whisked it away and where? Where has the world, both moving and stationary, gone?' The four quarters are nowhere to be seen; one does not know where the upper and nether regions have gone. Just as the dream would disappear in the waking state, the visible world has vanished. Or just as the moon and the stars disappear in the sunlight, this whole created world has been enveloped by the universal form (186-190). The mind of Arjuna lost its bearings, his intellect became overwrought and all the outgoing functions of his senses turned inwards to fill up his mind. The quiescence and concentration of his mind reached the furthest limit and all his thoughts were charmed away as if by a bewitching missile (*mohanastra*). Then he started looking on all sides in amazement. He saw that the four-armed figure of Lord Krishna before him had spread in myriad forms everywhere. As the clouds fill the sky in monsoon or the splendour of the sun grows and envelops the world at the time of dissolution, the Lord filled the entire universe with his universal form and left nothing there. At first the sight of this revelation gave immense satisfaction to Arjuna, and when he opened his eyes he saw before him the universal form (191-195). In this way, his ardent desire to see the cosmic form of God with his own eyes was fulfilled by Lord Krishna.

10. *Possessing many faces and eyes, displaying many marvelous sights, wearing many heavenly ornaments and holding many upraised celestial weapons,*

Then he saw myriad faces there, which looked as if they were royal mansions of the Lord of goddess *Lakshmi*, or treasure-houses of things of beauty flung wide open. He saw there the faces of *Shri Hari*, as if they were blossoming woodlands of bliss or sublime beauty crowned and enthroned. But amidst these faces he also saw some horrid faces, as if they were the legions of grim death rushing out to destroy the world, or as if they were the yawning jaws of death, or the forts built by horror or the great pits of world conflagration spitting out fire (196-200). He also saw there some singular faces, which were bedecked and serene. Indeed even to his eye of wisdom, the end of these faces remained out of sight. Then out of curiosity he turned his gaze towards the eyes of the universal form. He saw there myriad eyes which resembled beds of full-blown lotuses of varied colours or which looked splendid like sunbeams. There beneath the eyebrows, there beamed fiery eyes of fawn colour which looked like lightning

flashes ensuing from dark clouds at the time of deluge. After seeing everyone of the marvels in that revelation, Partha came to realise that there were innumerable sights, in that Divine vision (201-205). Then he felt an intense longing to see the whereabouts of his feet, crown and arms. But how could the desires of Partha, fortune's favourite, fail to be fulfilled? Could the quiver of *Lord Shiva* ever contain futile arrows? Or could the lips of God *Brahma* utter fallacious words? Arjuna saw the beginning and end of that unlimited universal form. His sight feasted on limbs of that vision, which even the *Vedas* could not fathom. He saw the majesty of that cosmic form which was decked with ornaments studded with different kinds of jewels (206-210). How can I describe those ornaments fashioned by *Brahman* itself out of its own being, with which to deck itself? That glorious splendour provides the light by which the sun and the moon shine and the universe is created and sustained. Who has the intellect to dive into that decorated state of the cosmic form, which is the essence of that Divine light? Arjuna saw that the Lord has fashioned the ornaments out of himself and worn them. Then he saw with the eye of wisdom that the hands of the cosmic form were straight and held weapons which flashed like the flames of world-conflagration. Then he discovered that the Supreme Lord himself had filled the world, by himself becoming his hands, weapons, his body and soul (211-215). As a result of his fierce rays even the stars crumbled to pieces like parched gram and even fire, scorched by his luster, entered the sea. Thus, Arjuna saw his innumerable hands with uplifted weapons which looked like spurts of deadliest poison or thickets of lightning flashes at the conflagration of world.

11. *Wearing heavenly garlands and robes, anointed with Divine perfumes, verily the God was full of all marvels, infinite and with faces turned everywhere.*

Then withdrawing his gaze from there in fear, Arjuna glanced at his neck and crown wreathed in flowers. Arjuna mused with wonder whether they were the source from which the wish-yielding tree had sprung. He saw the Lord wearing on his head incomparable lotuses, where goddess *Lakshmi*, the fountain of the great occult powers, takes her rest when tired. Lord had flower-bouquets on his crown, floral bracelets on his limbs and wreaths round his neck (216-220). With the yellowish silken *dhoti* round his waist he shone like the heaven encircled by sunlight or the *Meru* Mountain lined with gold. Arjuna saw that the body of the Supreme Person anointed with sandal-paste looked like *Shiva* smeared with camphor or *Kailasa* lined with mercury or the *Milky Sea* covered with milk or the sky overlaid with a cloth formed by unfolding the moon. Who can describe that superb fragrance, which adds luster to light, cools the heat of Divine ecstasy, embalms the natural smell of the earth and excels the other scents in purity and the aroma, which adorns the very person of cupid (221-225)? When Arjuna saw the beauty of Lord's bedecked form he was so bewildered that he could not make out if the Lord was seated or standing or lying down. When he opened his eyes wide, he saw everywhere only the universal form. When he shut his eyes and remained still, he saw the same form in his mind. When, to avoid seeing innumerable faces in front, he turned his back in fear, he beheld the same innumerable faces, hands and feet. Is there any wonder then, if Arjuna saw the all-pervading cosmic form with open eyes? But that it should become visible even when he had shut his eyes, is it not amazing? The grace of the Lord is such that his vision filled the mind of Arjuna, whether he saw it or not (226-230). So no sooner did he land on the shore from a flood of wonders, than he found himself thrown headlong into an

ocean of miracles. In this way Lord Krishna revealed very skillfully his universal form and filled the mind of Arjuna with his myriad forms. He was by nature pervader of the universe facing on all sides, and as Arjuna had entreated him to show him His cosmic form, he readily assumed that form. The sight which Lord Krishna gave to Arjuna was not the sight which sees with the daylight or candle-light, by which he could only see when his eyes were open and not when they were shut. So Arjuna could see the vision with his eyes open or shut or even in darkness, so said *Sanjaya* to *Dhritarashtra* in *Hastinapur* (231-235). He said, "O King, did you hear? Partha beheld the universal form of the Lord with myriad faces decked with ornaments of varied kinds."

12. *If the light of a thousand suns were to blaze forth in the sky all at once, it might be somewhat like the radiance of that Supreme Self.*

How can I describe to you the nature of that universal form? At the time of world conflagration, it is said that twelve suns come together to destroy the universe. Even if such thousand suns were to rise together, their cumulative light could not equal the luster of that form. If all the lightnings in the world were to gather together and combine with the world-consuming fire and the ten suns at the time of dissolution, their light would pale before the radiant beauty of that form and certainly would not equal it in purity (236-240). Such is the glory of *Shri Hari*. I could behold the radiant beauty of that form only through the grace of sage *Vyasa*.

13. *There in the body of the God of gods, Pandu's son (Arjuna) then beheld the whole universe centered with its myriad divisions.*

Arjuna beheld the whole universe with its expanse in that universal form. Like bubbles on the face of the ocean, or the imaginary city of the clouds in the sky, or ant-hills on the earth or particles of dust on a mountain, Arjuna saw this whole universe in the body of Lord Krishna, God of gods.

14. *Then overwhelmed with wonder, Arjuna, with hair standing on end, bowed his head before the Lord and said with folded hands;*

Now whatever notion of duality that he was different from the world which still lingered in him disappeared and Arjuna's mind was dissolved in the form (241-245). Inwardly his heart was filled with rapture, while his outer senses became benumbed. His hair stood on end from top to toe like the shoots of grass springing all over the surface of a mountain washed by the onset of monsoon. And like the moon-stone which melts at the touch of moon-light, Arjuna's body was covered with drops of sweat. As the lotus bud sways too and fro by a bee caught therein, Arjuna's body was shaking with the ripples of his inner rapturous joy. Just as the *camphor* tree, overfull with *camphor*, bursts out of its skin and sheds *camphor* flakes, so there trickled drops of tears from his eyes (246-250). His mind surged with the wave of ecstatic joy like the ocean swelling to flood-tide at rise of the moon. So the eight *sattvic* sentiments vied with one another to flood the mind of Arjuna, as a result of which he began to enjoy the sovereign bliss of Divine ecstasy. But even in that blissful union with God, Arjuna still retained a feeling of otherness from God. Then heaving a sigh, he looked around and after bowing down his head, he began to speak with folded hands.

Arjuna said:

15. *Lord, I see, within your body, all gods and hosts of beings of different species, Lord Brahma seated on his lotus seat, seers all and Nagas Divine.*

Arjuna said: O Lord, glory to you! Because of your grace ordinary people like me have been able to see your universal form (251-255). O my Master, you did another good thing, which gave me great joy. It is that I saw with my own eyes that you are the support of this created world. O God just as there are forests inhabited by beasts on the plateau of a mountain, I see on your body innumerable worlds. Like the cluster of planets in the sky or bird's nests on a big tree, gods and heavens are seen on your body. O Lord, I see in your body all the five gross elements, as well as the creatures, which are their products (256-260). So there is also *Satyaloka* in your body, and is he not the same God *Brahma*? If I look in the other direction, I see *Kailasa* with *Lord Shiva* and goddess *Parvati* in another part of your body. Not only this, but, O Lord, I see you also in your body. The families of *Kashyapa* and other seers and the nether world along with the *Nagas* are also to be seen in your universal form. Why need I say more? O Lord of the universe, all the fourteen worlds seem to be portrayed on the wall, in the form of each one of your limbs and all the innumerable denizens of these worlds are to be seen in these portraits. I am thus beholding the fathomless glory of your being (261-265).

16. *I see you everywhere of infinite form, with many arms, bellies, mouths and eyes. I do not see Your end, or the middle or the beginning, O Lord of the universe, of universal form.*

When I see all around with the aid of my Divine sight, I see your arms like sprouts of the sky. At this time, O God, all your hands seem to be carrying on their operations all at once. I see also your limitless bellies as if they are the treasures of the worlds opened in the sky. The mouths of your myriad heads seem like fruits borne by this tree of *Brahman*. I also behold innumerable mouths and unlimited rows of eyes in this universal form (266-270). Not only this, but I see this whole universe in your body, with the annihilation of all distinctions of heaven, earth and the nether world, the quarters and the sky. I cannot find even an iota of space which is not filled by you; you are so all-pervasive. I see that you have pervaded all the innumerable creatures of different kinds. I then began to think of whence you came, whether you are seated or standing here, what mother's womb bore you, what is your place, figure and age, what is beyond you and what is your support (271-275). Then I came to realise that you are your own support and that you are unborn, beginningless and self-existent. O Lord, you are neither sitting nor standing, you are neither tall nor short, and you are over and beneath yourself only. If I am asked what is your figure and age, I can say that it is exactly like yourself and like nothing else. O God, you are at the front and in the rear of yourself. O boundless Lord, whatever I see around me, you are all that. But I see only one flaw in your universal form. It is this that it has no beginning nor middle nor end (276-280). I searched for them in all places, but could not fathom their depth. I have no doubt now that your form does not possess any of them. O you limitless Lord of the world, who have no beginning, middle or end, I saw your real universal form in this manner.

On your universal form innumerable figures are visible, as though you have donned a garment of variegated colours. Just as trees and creepers, when laden with flowers and fruits, look

beautiful, all these figures on your person seem splendid with their ornaments. O God, you are like an ocean, on which these figures look like ripples, or you are like a beautiful tree laden with fruits in the form of these figures (281-285). Just as the earth is filled with creatures or the sky is studded with stars, so is your universal form filled with these figures. A universe is produced from each one of your figures and gets dissolved in them, and all these figures are as many as hairs on your body. Then I ask myself, "Who is the person who has set up this vast expanse of the universe? To whom does he belong?" When I muse like this, I realise that you are none other than my charioteer. O *Mukunda*, though you are all-pervading, you assume this comely human form to bestow grace on your devotees. My mind and eyes are thoroughly pleased at the sight of your four-armed form of light complexion and if I wish, I can clasp it with my two hands (286-290). O Universal Presence, you assume this comely form only to grant favours to your devotees. But we call it ordinary human form because of our defective sight. But after you gave me Divine vision, I have overcome this deficiency and realise your true glory. But I readily recognised that you, who had sat in the hind part of the crocodile-shaped yoke of the chariot, have assumed this universal form.

17. *I see you with a crown, a mace and a discus, a shining mass of light on all sides, so difficult to behold all around, immeasurable, blazing like the fire or the sun.*

O *Shri Hari*, is this not the crown that you were wearing on your head? But its luster and size are breath-taking. Is this not the discus, which is revolving in your hand? That you are trying to steady it, indicates that it is the same discus which you had before (291-295). Is this not the same mace which you had before in your second hand? For, O *Govinda*, you are moving forward your two lower hands to reign the horses. O Lord of the universe, I appreciate fully that you assumed this universal form in order to fulfill my desire. But what a miracle! I am not worthy even to feel surprised to see this form. My mind is bewildered at the sight of this miracle. I have no time even to think whether your form is here or not. The marvelous thing about your radiant form is that it has filled this world. Before its marvelous and fierce luster, even the sight of fire would become dazzled or the sun would look as dim as a glow-worm (296-300). It appears as though this world is engulfed in your effulgent light or the entire sky is covered by world-destroying lightning or a bedstead has been built high in the sky by means of world-consuming flames. I cannot bear to see your radiant form even with my Divine sight. That radiance is getting increasingly fierce and scalding, so much so, that a mere glance at it troubles my Divine sight. It seems as if the third eye of *Lord Shiva* has opened and let out the world-consuming fire, which lay smouldering in it. Likewise, it looks as if the whole world is caught in the all-consuming flames of the five fires and is being reduced to charcoal (301-305). For the first time I have set my eyes on this marvelous and radiant form of yours. Verily this all-pervasive radiance of your universal form has no limits.

18. *You are the Imperishable, the Supreme Truth to be known, and the ultimate repose of this universe. You are the undecaying guardian of the eternal Law. You are the Primeval Person, so I believe.*

O Lord, you are the Imperishable Supreme *Brahman*, and are beyond the three and half syllables of *Om* and the *Vedas* are in eternal quest of your abode. You are the origin of all appearance and also their only place of repose. You are that eternal, fathomless and indestructible Being. You are the fountain of religion, self-existent and eternally new. You are the Lord of this universe, the Supreme Person, the thirty-seventh beyond the thirty-six principles.

19. *(I see you) as Almighty, without beginning, middle or end, with innumerable arms, with the sun and the moon as your eyes; I see your mouths as blazing fires, scorching this world with your incandescence.*

You have no beginning, middle or end and your might is unlimited. You have hands and feet everywhere (306-310). The sun and the moon are your eyes and through them you engage in your sportive play of mercy and wrath. You chastise one with your wrathful gaze, while you protect another with your gracious glance. O Lord, I see your universal form in various ways. Your face is like the fire which blazes at the time of dissolution. As the wild flames of forest-fire on the mountains envelop all things which come in their way, your tongue rolls between the rows of teeth, licking the jaws. The whole universe is singed in the radiant heat of your mouth and tormented by the bright luster of your form.

20. *You fill this space between heaven and earth, as also all quarters, alone. Seeing your wondrous (but) dreadful form the three worlds tremble, O Supreme Self.*

And I behold that you alone have filled up the heaven, earth, the space between them, the nether world, all the ten quarters and the horizon (314-315). It is as though the whole universe along with the sky is plunged in your dreadful form or all the fourteen regions are caught in the waves in the ocean of the marvelous sentiment. How can I comprehend your astounding miraculous form? Your grand all-pervading form defies the power of imagination and the fierce heat of your radiant form is also beyond endurance. All talk of happiness at the sight of your cosmic form is at an end; on the other hand, the world is struggling for its very life. It is a mystery to me as to how your marvelous form has caused this terror, but all the three worlds are engulfed in the waves of great sorrow due to this terror. But then why should the world be plunged in terror and unhappiness at the sight of your magnanimous form? But I feel that your vision will not make anyone happy (316-320). So long as I had not set my eyes on your universal form, the worldly pleasures tasted sweet, but now that I have seen your form, they seem abhorrent and frightful. If out of fright, I wished to clasp your form in my arms, how can I do so? And if I am denied this pleasure of hugging you, how can I take courage in this gruesome plight? A retreat at this stage is not possible because of the uncontrollable worldly existence. And if I wish to go ahead, I cannot hold your gigantic form in my arms. Alas, this poor mortal world, caught between two stools of dangers, is becoming like parched grain. Thus my desire to see your universal form has reduced me to this sorry plight. As if one scorched by fire were to rush to the sea to cool his burns and become frightened by its rushing waves (321-325), similar is the condition of the world now. The whole universe is distressed to see your cosmic form.

21. *Yonder the hosts of gods enter you; some in fear praise you with folded hands, saying 'All hail'. Bands of great seers and siddhas sing your glory in many a psalm.*

Now see yonder the hosts of gods. Some have burnt their seeds of actions in your effulgence and have become merged in your being with loving devotion. Still others are frightened and have folded their hands in prayer. They are praying, 'O Lord, we are plunged in this ocean of ignorance and caught in the snares of worldly pleasures. We have fallen between the two stools of the heavenly joy and wordily pleasures. Who but you will deliver us from this plight? We have, therefore, resigned wholeheartedly to your will (326-330)'. O God, there are also

here assemblages of great seers like *Kashyapa*, *siddhas* like *Kapila*, and bands of semi-divine beings (*Vidyadharas*) saying, 'All hail' to you and praising your name.

22. *Rudras, Adityas, Vasus and Sadhyas, Vishvedevas, the two Ashvins, Maruts and Manes, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Siddhas all behold you spell-bound.*

The eleven *Rudras*, twelve *Adityas*, eight *Vasus*, demigods known as *Sadhyas*, two *Ashvins*, the *Vishvedevas* and *Maruts* (storm-gods), as also *Manes*, celestial singers, *Yakshas*, demons, gods headed by *Indra* and all *Siddhas* are looking at your Divine revelation with great longing from their regions. O Lord, all of them are looking at you with amazement and are bowing down their heads before you (331-335). The heaven is resounding with the loud acclamations uttered in melodious tones by them with folded hands, touching their heads in salutation. Just as the sylvan trees, aided by the vernal season, sprout into foliage and bear fruit, their devout supplication, aided by the eight expressions of pious emotions (*sattvika bhavas*) has resulted in their joining the palms of their hands and has borne fruit in the form of this vision.

23. *Beholding your mighty form with its myriad eyes and mouths, with myriad arms, thighs and feet, O mighty armed (Krishna), with many bellies and fearful teeth, the worlds are in panic and so am I.*

In this way fortune has favoured them and a blissful day has dawned on them, since they could see the vision of your Divine cosmic form. Seeing this form of yours, pervading all the three worlds, even the gods stand in awe. For from wherever a person sees it, he sees it facing him. Although it is a single Presence, it has myriad, variegated and dreadful mouths and eyes and innumerable hands holding weapons (336-340). It bears numerous handsome arms, feet, bellies and different colours. But it's each single mouth, looks intoxicated with excitement, as though at the end of the world dissolution, the wrathful god of death has kindled fires (as at *Holi* festival) all around, or the destructive weapons of *Lord Shiva*, or the bands of world-destroying *Bhairavas* (who attend on *Lord Shiva*) or the maids of world-destroying Power (*Shakti*) have set out to destroy living creatures. I see here your gaping mouths, from which the teeth are sticking out in a dreadful manner, like ferocious lions out of their dens. Just as destructive spirits roam about in great glee, in the darkness of the world-destroying night, so your jaws appear to be pitch-black, as a result of your sucking blood at the time of world-destruction (341-345). In short, as if the world-destroyer Time, has given a clarion call for war or death, has engulfed all creatures at the time of world-destruction, your fierce mouths are spreading terror. Oh, this poor created world! Even if you look at it curiously, you will find that it has shriveled through misery, like the trees on the banks of the river *Yamuna* (scorched by the poison of cobra *Kaliya*). In this great ocean of your vision, in the form of universal destruction, the tiny boat in the form of the created world, is being tossed about in the storm of sorrow. On this, O God, you may chide me in wrath and forbid me to think of the world's agony, but to enjoy in peace the meditation of your cosmic form. But, O Lord, my description of the world's agony is only a smoke-screen for my plight; in truth, it is I, who am shaken with fear (346-350). Though the world-destroying *Rudra* stands in awe of me, and god of death hides himself in fear, I am reduced to this pitiable plight, in which I am shaken by fright both in and out. And you call it your Divine cosmic form. Is it not strange that you should call it by this name, even though it beats terror hollow, by its dreadful effulgence? It is the great ravager, which is causing havoc.

24. *Seeing you brushing the sky, ablaze with many colours, with gaping mouths and large flashing eyes, my innermost self is quaking, O Vishnu; I find neither firmness nor peace.*

You have several angry faces, which are as though beating the great Destroyer with a wager and they are so large that even the sky appears stunted before them. Even the vast expanse of the sky cannot enfold them nor can the wind careering through the three worlds encase them. On the other hand, the vapours coming out of those mouths is burning fire itself and spitting out blazing flames. Again, not one face is like another; they are of diverse colours. One wonders whether the world-destroying fire at the time of dissolution, takes the form of these fire-spitting mouths (351-355).

Its radiant effulgence is such that it is reducing the three worlds to ashes. It has also mouths which contain both teeth and jaws. It is as though the wind should suffer from convulsions, or the sea should suffer in great flood or the fire of deadly poison should destroy the submarine fire or the deadly poison should swallow fire or death should start an unrelenting holocaust, so this all-destroying effulgence of the universal form has put forth fiery mouths. Your mouths are so large as though the sky has cracked, producing great gaps in it or *Lord Shiva* has opened a hole in the nether world to let in *Hiranyaksha*, who had seized the earth in his armpit and wanted to take shelter underground (356-360). Likewise your mouths have spread out and your tongues are rolling and lolling therein. As the universe will not make even a single morsel for it, they have not made an attempt to munch it. The tongues are lolling in the valleys of your mouths, like poisonous flames from the hissing dragons in the nether world, reaching out to the sky. The tips of sharp jaws sticking out of the lips, look like bastions with the bands of world-consuming lightnings, at the time of dissolution. The eyes looking out of the hollow in the forehead like billows of death hiding in darkness, are frightening terror itself.

I do not know what you are going to achieve by wearing this mask of terror. But one thing is certain, I am feeling the dread of death (361-365). I longed to see your universal form and that longing of mine has been well fulfilled. My eyes are sated with joy by seeing your cosmic form. I do not care if this earthy body of mine perishes. But I fear now, whether my soul would remain intact. Because of this terror, my body is shaking, my mind is in anguish, and my intellect is unnerved, as a result of which I have lost my bearings. But now even the blissful and motionless Self, which is beyond all these, is full of tremours. O Lord, the passion to see your universal form had seized me, but its vision has dislodged my knowledge. And I am afraid whether my tie of discipleship with you will also last (366-370). After seeing your cosmic form, my mind has become despondent and I am making a frantic effort to revive my courage. I had already lost courage and then I have had this vision of your universal form. Be that as it may, your instruction has bewildered me. My poor soul is running wild in search of a haven of rest but finds it not. This Divine form of yours is a great killer and the life of the universe itself, is in peril. How then can I live, if I remain quiet?

25. *Looking at your mouth with fearful teeth, resembling the fire of dissolution, I know no quarters nor find comfort. Have mercy, O Lord of gods, O Abode of the world.*

Like the vessels of terror which have burst before our eyes, your gigantic gaping mouths have spread before our view (371-375). And the teeth and the jaws are too dense in the mouth covered by the lips, which form as it were a thick hedge of world-destroying weapons. Your formidable mouths exuding vehemence, are like *Takshaka* cobra filled with venom, or the

new moon night possessed by ghosts or the world-destroying fire flourishing fiery missiles, so the vehemence of your huge mouths is overflowing and making me feel as if deadly torrents of water are flooding us. If the whirlwind and the world-destroying fire at the time of dissolution come together, will anything remain unburnt? Likewise seeing your destructive mouths, I have lost my courage; a grievous delusion has come upon me and I have lost my bearings regarding the quarters and my whereabouts (376-380). No sooner did I get a cursory glimpse of your form, the fount of my happiness has dried up.

Now, therefore, please withdraw this unwieldy form of yours. Would I have broached this matter with you, if I had the slightest indication of what you were upto? Now save our lives on this occasion from this world-destroying cosmic form of yours. If you are really our Master, protect my life by holding back your sprawling form. You are the life and the abode of this whole universe. You seem to be unmindful of this and have undertaken the work of destruction. O God, extend your grace immediately and withdrawing your *Maya*, relieve us from this great terror (381-385). I have been making these piteous entreaties all along, because this gigantic form of yours frightens me. When the demons laid siege to the city of *Indra*, I lifted it alone in defiance of death. But your cosmic form is not a thing of that kind, because you have outdone death itself and set about gulping us all including the universe. Even though the time is not ripe for world-dissolution, you have descended upon us as the destroyer. As a result, this poor universe has become short-lived. Alas, how perverse is the course of fate! I sought the vision of your cosmic form in the hope of attaining blissful peace, but what a disaster has come upon us! Alas, this world is as good as lost, because you yourself are ready to gobble it (386-390). What is this that I see? Are you not opening your myriad mouths wide and swallowing both the armies, lock stock and barrel?

26. *And here all sons of Dhritarashtra, along with hosts of kings of earth, Bhishma, Drona and the son of the charioteer (Karna) along with our prominent warriors*

Are these not the warriors of the *Kuru* race, the sons of blind *Dhritarashtra*? These too, have entered along with their retinue in your mouth. And many kings came from other countries to help the *Kauravas* but none has remained to carry the news of their fate to their respective homes. You are thus swallowing up all of them indiscriminately. You are gulping down the herds of elephants in rut and you are seizing the armies, which are deployed on the field of battle. Swarms of soldiers from artillery and infantry are rushing into your mouths (391-395). Myriads of deadly weapons are being swallowed by you, and each single weapon is capable of destroying the entire universe. You are also consuming hastily the armies consisting of elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry including chariots, with horses harnessed to them, without even touching them with your teeth. O Lord, how do you get pleasure from all this?

Here is *Bhishmacharya* than whom there is no better speaker of truth and brave warrior. But you have swallowed him up along with the *Brahmin Dronacharya*. Alas, the great warrior *Karna*, born of the Sun, has rushed into your mouth and I see that all warriors from our side also are blown off like straw. O my God, how strange is this outcome of Divine grace! I prayed to God for a vision of his universal form and brought down this death and destruction on the whole universe (396-400). Before this, the Lord had recounted to me his principal manifestations, but I could not see the all-pervading God before me, so I entreated him to

show me his cosmic form. But no one can avoid what is ordained by fate and what is ordained by fate shapes our will. How then can I escape from the guilt which people will lay on my head? In days of yore, the gods acquired nectar by churning the *Milky Ocean*, but not content with it, they went on churning it until the ocean delivered deadly poison. In a way, that disaster was less troublesome as it could be warded off, and Lord *Shiva* saved the world from that danger. But this present disaster is like a blazing whirlwind; who can bring it under control? Who can gulp down the vault of heaven, brimful with poison? Who indeed has the gigantic strength to wrestle with the great Destroyer (401-405)? (*Jnanadeva* says), in this way did Arjuna grieve over the great vision. As yet he was not aware of the Lord's intention, as he was seized by the great delusive impression, that he was the slayer and the *Kauravas*, the slain. The Lord showed him his cosmic form to clear that delusion. Under the cover of that vision, he brought home to Arjuna the great truth that no one other than Him is the slayer. But Arjuna could not grasp this truth, and was unnecessarily suffering from agony and terror.

27. *They are rushing headlong into your mouths, striking terror with fearful teeth. Some of them, who are caught between your teeth are seen with their heads crushed into bits and pieces.*

On that occasion, he (Arjuna) said: "O, Lord, look here; like clouds dissolving in the sky, the armies on both sides have disappeared in your mouths with their swords and armours (406-410). Just as twenty-one heavens along with the nether worlds, are swallowed by the great Destroyer in wrath at the time of dissolution, or the riches of a miser vanish all of a sudden due to an adverse fate, so the armies which have assembled here, have disappeared into your mouths and none of the warriors have emerged safely out of your clutches. See how inscrutable are the ways of providence! Like the twigs of *Ashoka* tree chewed by the camels, all these men are rushing into your mouths to their destruction.

It is seen that their crowned heads, are pounded between the pincers of your jaws (411-415). The crown jewels have been caught and crushed, in the interstices of your teeth and the bottom of the tongue, as well as the tips of the jaws are smeared with their power. Although the great Destroyer, in the form of this vision has swallowed the bodies and strength of men, he has preserved their skeletons and head, which are the best parts of their bodies. Arjuna went on: Is there no other course for the creatures who are born? The entire world is falling into the deep waters, in the form of the mouth of the cosmic form. The whole creation is entering your mouth and the Supreme Destroyer is standing unmoved and swallowing it with ease (416-420). *Brahma* and other gods are rushing into his uppermost mouth, while others are entering the mouths lower down. Some of his mouths are destroying creatures as soon as they are born. None escapes from the clutches of his mouths.

28. *As many river currents rush towards the sea, so these heroic warriors on the earth, are flinging themselves into your flaming mouths.*

Just as the courses of the big rivers move towards the sea, so the entire world from all sides is rushing into your mouths. All the groups of created beings, who are moving along the way of life and treading the steps of day and night, are ending their journey by entering your mouths.

29. *As moths fly with full speed into the blazing fire towards destruction, so these men make haste*

to enter Your mouths to perish there.

Like swarms of moths falling into the valleys of burning mountains, all these men are rushing into your mouths (421-425). But whoever enters these mouths, their very life is blotted out as the water dries up on red-hot iron.

30. *You are licking Your lips, devouring all the worlds with Your flaming mouths on all sides. Filling the entire worlds with their radiance, Your fearful rays are scorching it, O Vishnu.*

And your ravenous hunger is not appeased by swallowing all the worlds. What is it that has fed the flames of your gastric fire? Like a patient recovering from illness or a famine-stricken beggar craving for food, your tongues are lolling out and licking the lips. Nothing that is eatable, has escaped from your mouth. How extraordinary is this hunger of yours, how voracious it is, as though you are impatient to gulp down the seas, to make a mouthful of the mountains, to grind the whole world in your jaws (426-430), to swallow all the quarters or to consume the starry vault; such seems to be your greed. Just as desire is fed by sensual enjoyment or fire is fed by firewood, so the more you eat, the more ravenous becomes your hunger. See how wide your single mouth has opened, so that the entire universe is resting on the tip of your tongue, as if it is a wood-apple thrown into the sub-marine fire. But you possess myriad mouths. where can we find worlds to feed them? And why have you created so many mouths without providing for their food and drink?

The blazing fires ensuing from your mouths, encircle this poor universe. As though the deers are caught in a forest-conflagration (431-435), such is the plight of this world. You are not the Supreme Spirit, but relentless destiny dodging our footsteps, as though the Great Destroyer has spread his net to catch fish in the form of the world. How can this world come out of the net, spread by the blazing mouths of your cosmic form? These are not mouths, but they are craters of flaming fires. The fire knows not its scorching power, yet whatever creature is caught in the fire, loses its life. Just as a sharp weapon or poison does not know its lethal power, you are totally unaware of your ferocity. But the whole universe is perishing in the cavern of your mouth on this side (436-440). O Lord, you alone are *Brahman*, which pervades this universe; then why have you become all-destroyer? I have given up all hope of remaining alive and would request you to disclose your intention frankly, without deference to me. How much are you going to extend this ferocious form of yours? O God, remember your Divine nature and extend your grace to me.

31. *Reveal to me who You are in this dreaded form. My obeisance to You, have mercy, O great Lord, I seek to know You, the Primeval One, for I fail to comprehend Your intent.*

You are known only to the *Vedas*, the adorable One of the universe and the origin of the three worlds. O God, hear this request of mine. Saying this Arjuna prostrated his head at the feet of Lord Krishna and said: O God of gods, please pay your attention (441-445). I prayed to you, to reveal your universal form to derive peace of mind, but you have all of a sudden become ready to make a mouthful of the universe. Tell me who you are and why you have gathered these dreadful mouths and held so many weapons in your hands. What is your intention in getting angry with us, in growing taller than the sky and staring at us angrily? Why are you, O God, vying with the Destroyer in annihilating the world? What is your purpose in

doing so, tell me. Hearing this speech of Arjuna, Lord Krishna said, "You ask me who I am and why I have grown this ferocious form, hear then (446-450)."

The blessed Lord said:

32. *Time I am, ripe to destroy the world, set out to annihilate the creatures. Of all the warriors ranged here for fight, none excepting you, will survive;*

I am, indeed, the Destroyer and I am growing up to annihilate the world. My mouths have spread everywhere and I am going to swallow all the worlds. Hearing this, Arjuna said to himself, "Alas, in order to escape from the disaster (of extinction of my race), I prayed to Lord Krishna to show me his universal form, but he revealed this dreadful form." But anticipating that his harsh speech would cause anguish and distress to him, Lord Krishna said, "O Arjuna, there is another thing. All of you, *Pandavas*, will survive this universal destruction." Hearing these words, Arjuna got a fresh lease of life, which was almost on the point of breathing its last. Arjuna, who was caught in the grip of Death, the Ravager, came to his senses and began to listen to the Lord with attention (451-455). The Lord said at that time: O Arjuna, keep in mind that you *Pandavas* are dear to me, so I am going to swallow all the rest. Like a lump of butter fallen into the gigantic fire of lightning, the universe as you saw, entered into my mouth; Nothing of it will survive this holocaust. The armies are vainly indulging in empty chatter. The warriors, who have assembled here, are boasting of their valour and saying that their army of elephants surpasses god of death in destruction. On the strength of their four-limbed army, they are puffed up with the pride of their prowess and vying with the Destroyer. They are bragging that they would create a new world, slay Death himself with a wager and drink the world in a single draught (456-460), that they would gulp down this whole universe, set fire to the firmament and nail the wind down to one spot by an arrow. Forming gangs of armed warriors, they are growling and vaunting the valour of their elephant-army as deadlier than even the god of death. Their words are sharper than weapons, fiercer than fire and are so destructive that in comparison even the deadliest poison would taste sweet. But these warriors are like imaginary castles in the cloud-land, rolls of void or fruits painted on canvas. It is not a real army facing you, but it is like a mirage in floods, a snake made of rags or a show of decorated puppets (461-465).

33. *Stand up, therefore, and win renown; conquer your foes and enjoy a flourishing kingdom. They have already been killed by Me; be you merely the instrument, O ambidextrous (Arjuna).*

I have already destroyed the power on which their physical activities are sustained. All these warriors are now lifeless like the clay figures in a potter's home. Just as when the string by which the puppets dance snaps, they fall down by the merest touch, so you will be able to shatter your enemy's army without loss of time. Therefore, O Arjuna, come to your senses and rise up. At the time of capture of *Virata's* cattle by the *Trigartas*, you benumbed the enemy's army by your magical missile and disrobed them at the hands of *Uttara*, faint-hearted son of *Virata*. That army has now become impotent and has come here ready for war. Destroy it now and earn eternal glory, so that people will say 'Arjuna, single handed, has vanquished the army (466-470)'. And this will not be a mere victory, but will bring with it the entire kingdom. O Arjuna, be a mere instrument in My hand.

34. *Slay Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and other warriors too, already killed by Me; do not grieve, fight and you will triumph over your foes in battle.*

Do not be cowed down by *Drona*, or be frightened of *Bhishma*, and do not feel any scruples to take up arms against *Karna*. Do not be perplexed as to how to get rid of *Jayadratha*. Know that all these and other famous warriors are little more than portraits of lions drawn on a wall, which can be erased by a moist hand. O Arjuna, if you ask my opinion about this crowd, which has come to fight, I say that they are nothing but phantoms, I have already swallowed them up (471-475). Their brief span of life ended the moment you saw them enter my mouth. They are just like hollow rinds, peeled off the plantain tree. Therefore, rise up now, kill them, already slain by Me and do not fall into the grip of a non-existent agony. As one makes a scare-crow and fells it down by an arrow, I have acted in the same manner. You be a mere tool in My hands. O dear Arjuna, know that those who were hostile to you were rendered powerless even at the time of their birth. Therefore, win this victory and enjoy the kingdom. Let this be written in the annals of history that your cousins, who were by nature, proud, powerful and impudent, were slain by you, without much trouble (476-480).

Sanjaya said:

35. *Upon hearing these words of Krishna, Arjuna, crowned with a diadem, with folding hands and trembling, bowed down and spoke to Krishna, with a stammer, prostrate and panic-stricken.*

Jnanadeva states, “*Sanjaya* narrated this tale to the king of *Kurus*, who was full of despondency, with his desires unfulfilled. Lord Krishna was speaking in a sonorous voice, which was like the sound of the torrential waters of the Ganges rushing down *Satyaloka*. Just as the torrential rain of the big clouds, comes down with a resounding sound or the *Milky Sea* was reverberating when it was being churned, Lord Krishna, who was the fathomless source of the world of many forms, was speaking in a rich voice (481-485). That Arjuna heard a little, but it is not known whether it brought him solace or distress. His whole body was shaking. He was repeatedly bending and folding his hands and was touching the feet of Shri Krishna with his head. As he struggled to speak, his voice was getting choked up; whether this was out of joy or distress, it is for you to decide. But from the words of the above verse, I could guess that this was the condition of Arjuna after he heard the speech of Lord Krishna. Then Arjuna bowed down before the feet of the Lord in trepidation and said: “Did you not say (486-490), O Arjuna, I am the Destroyer whose Divine play is destruction of all creatures?”

Arjuna said:

36. *It is fitting, O Krishna that in your glory the world rejoices and dotes upon you. The terror-struck demons flee in all directions and the throngs of Siddhas do homage (to you).*

I regard this utterance of yours as inevitable. But it does not seem right to me that as a Destroyer, you are going to swallow this world at the time of its continuance. How can one take away one’s youth and replace it with untimely old age? Therefore, what you wish will probably not come to pass. O Lord, has the sun ever set at noon, before the lapse of four *praharas* (twelve hours)? And, O God, even though you are unailing, you have also to go through three phases, which are potent in their own times (491-495). When the origination of the world (*utpatti*) starts, then continuance and dissolution are held in abeyance. At the time of

continuance (*sthiti*), origination and dissolution do not hold sway. And at the time of dissolution (*laya*), origination and continuance cease to act. This order has existed from eternity and is unalterable. Now this world is in the phase of continuance and is in the full bloom of life and enjoyment. Therefore, I do not see any prospect that you will bring about its dissolution at this juncture.

Then the Lord nodded his assent and said, "O Partha, I have clearly demonstrated to you, that the life of both the armies has come to an end. The rest of the world will meet its death in their appointed times." No sooner had the Lord said this, than Arjuna saw that the world had become restored to its former state (496-500). Then he said, "O Lord, you are the mover and stage-manager and it is owing to you, that this world has resumed its former position. In this connection, I recall your fame that you deliver the mortals plunged in the ocean of misery. Recollecting it again and again, I am enjoying that state of Supreme bliss and rolling on the waves of that ever-lasting joy. O God, this world that has received a fresh lease of life, is enamoured of you, and you are wiping out the evil doers. The demons in the three worlds are fleeing away in all directions, in dread of you (501-505). On the other hand, the gods, mortals, *Siddhas*, *Yakshas*, in short, all beings, whether moving or stationary, are doing obeisance to you.

37. *And why should they not bow down to you, O Supreme Self, the First Cause, even greater than God Brahma? O Infinite Lord of gods, the abode of the world, You are the Imperishable being and non-being and are beyond both.*

O Lord *Narayana*, I need not ask, why these demons are fleeing away from you, without taking refuge in you. I know it all; O Lord, how can darkness subsist after sunrise? You are the fount of all light and in your radiant light all these demons are swept away like straw. O *Shri Rama*, the supreme glory of yours, which was beyond our ken so far, has been revealed by you (506-510). Your Will has given birth to this *Maya*, which has spread many rows of the creations and the creepers in the form of creatures all over the world. O God, you are the Supreme Essence, limitless and eternal. You are endless, endowed with unlimited attributes. You are impartial to all and are the God of gods. You are the support of the universe and are imperishable. You are the manifest and the unmanifest and that which is also beyond that.

38. *You are the first among gods, the Primeval Person; You are the final refuge of this universe. You are the knower, the knowable, the final abode; all this is strung in you, O Lord of infinite form.*

You are the source of both *prakriti* and *purusha* and also beyond both. You are the eternal Spirit and there is no one prior to you. You are the very spring and support of life and you alone possess the knowledge of the past and the future (511-515). O God, you are the treasure from which the *Vedas* derive happiness, and you are the support of *Maya*, which upholds all the three worlds. You are the final abode in which the *Maya* becomes merged in your being, at the end of dissolution. In short, this expanded universe owes its existence to you. How can anyone describe the glory of yours, who has unlimited forms?

39. *You are Wind, Fire, Moon, Yama and Varuna; You are the Lord of creatures, the great grand sire of all, Hail to you, a thousand times, all hail. Hail unto you and over again all hail.*

40. *I salute you in front and from behind; I salute you on every side, O All, of infinite vigour and of immeasurable might, you encompass all and so are All.*

O God, is there anything in which you do not abide? Is there any spot in which you do not dwell? Enough of this description! My salutations to you, wherever you are! O Infinite Lord, you are the Wind, *Yama* the god of death, who chastises all and the abdominal fire in all creatures (516-520). You are *Varuna*, the Moon, god *Brahma* who creates the world and the primal progenitor of *Brahma*. O Lord of the universe, all things that exist in this world are your manifestations, whether they have form or not. My salutations to them.

In this way, Arjuna did obeisance to the Lord with his heart full of love and said again, 'My salutations to you, O Lord, my salutations to you'. Then he beheld the Lord closely and said again, 'My salutations to you, O Lord, my salutations to you'. Then he saw every limb of that form with great satisfaction and repeated, 'My salutation to you O Lord, my salutation to you' (521-525). He saw the moving and stationary things in that entire form and said again, 'My salutations to you, O Lord, my salutations to you'. In this manner, unlimited and marvelous forms were revealed to Arjuna. In wonderment, he said again and again, 'My salutations to you, O Lord, my salutations to you'. He could not also recollect a better form of *panegyric* than this and could not also keep quiet. He uttered such resonant eulogies in a state of devotional love. Thus he gave a thousand bows to the Lord and said, "I bow down to you, as you stand facing me. It is useless to ask whether you have a front and a rear. But O Lord, I bow down to you, who are standing in the rear (526-530). As you stood behind me, I spoke of your rear, but in your universal form which pervades the world, you cannot possibly have a front or a rear. I do not know how to describe your different limbs, but you abide in all in the form of self. My salutations to you. O God, you are the store of boundless strength, possessed of incalculable might and ever the same to all. My salutations to you. You remain pervading all, as the sky fills up empty space. You abide everywhere, as the waves sweeping over the *Milky Ocean* consist of nothing but milk (531-535). I have now realised that you are not different from this universe, but that you are all this universe."

41. *Regarding You as a friend, I recklessly accosted You as 'O Krishna', 'O Yadava', 'O friend', not knowing this greatness of Yours, out of indifference or love.*

O Lord, not knowing your real nature, I behaved with you, as if you were my kinsman. Alas, this was an improper act on my part. I used nectar to cleanse the floor, exchanged the wish-yielding cow for a colt and cut the philosophers' stone which I had come across for foundation work. I cut the wish-yielding tree to prepare a hedge for my farm, and when I had chanced upon a mine of philosophers' stones, I utilized these stones to drive away vagrant cattle. I used to take undue advantage of my intimacy with you (536-540), as on this present occasion. What is this warfare! How paltry! But I have prevailed upon you, the Supreme *Brahman*, to become my charioteer. O liberal Lord, we sent you to the *Kauravas* as our envoy to negotiate terms of peace with them. Although you are a mighty God, we have as it were, bartered you to make paltry gains. The fool that I am, I did not recognise you to be the object of the rapturous *samadhi* of the *yogis* and used it to tick you off.

42. *And if I have slighted you in fun, while at play or in bed, sitting or at meals, either alone, O Krishna, or before others, I ask for your forgiveness, O immeasurable One.*

You are the Primal Being of this universe. But when you were giving an audience, we used to talk to you jestingly as to an ordinary relation. When we sometimes visited you, we expected to be treated on equal terms with you and we used to take offence, if you were remiss (541-545). On such occasions we were obstinate enough to bring you to your knees and coax us. In the arrogance of my wisdom, I have often turned my back on you. Was it proper for us to do all this? This was a gross blunder on our part. O God, when we played balancing the pole or wrestling or games of dice, we used to quarrel vehemently and reproach you. We used to claim unblushingly the best things for ourselves and even dared to counsel you, though you are omniscient. We used to defy you by asking you, 'What do we owe to you'? This offence of ours is so grievous that even the universe will not contain it. But I swear that all this took place because of my ignorance of your Divinity (546-550).

If you remembered me at mealtime and wished affectionately that I should share the meal with you, I used to sit sullen out of empty pride. I used to play in your inner chamber without scruples and used to share your bed without any qualms. I used to regard you only as a member of the *Yadava* clan and used to swear at you when you wanted to leave. I used to share with you the same seat or turned a deaf ear to what you said. All this was the result of our close intimacy, O Infinite Lord, how many of them shall I tell you? I am guilty of such trespasses (551-555), O Lord forgive me, with motherly love, these indiscretions, whether done in your presence or behind your back. Sometimes when the river goes to join the sea with muddy waters, the sea cannot but accept it. In the same way overlook whatever rude words I said to you, through love or indiscretion. It is because of your forgiving nature, this earth has become forbearing and is able to bear the burden of all creatures. Whatever submissions I make in this regard, will not be sufficient. Therefore, O Immeasurable Lord, I have taken refuge at your feet and so overlook all my misdemeanors (556-560).

43. *You are the father of the world, moving or non-moving; You are the venerable teacher, worthier than others. There is none equal to You; how can there be anyone better in all the three worlds, O Lord of matchless might?*

O Lord Krishna, now I realise your true glory. It is this, that you are the origin of this universe and are the God Supreme over all other gods. You are the primal preceptor, who taught even the *Vedas*. O *Shri Rama*, you are profound and inscrutable and same to all living creatures. You are incomparable in all your perfect attributes and you are second to none. Need I say that there is no one equal to you? This whole universe is contained in the vault of heaven. So it would be impertinent for me to say that somebody is equal to you. How can one talk about any being, higher than you (561-565)? Therefore, you abide in this universe singly and there is no one equal or superior to you. This is your extraordinary glory, with a beggar's description.

44. *Therefore, bowing low and prostrating the body, I beseech you, the adorable Lord. As father with son, as friend with friend, as lover with the loved one, O Lord, pray bear with me.*

Saying this, Arjuna prostrated his body before the Lord, at that time his mind was filled with eight pious (*sattvika*) emotions. He said, "O God, be gracious and deliver me from this sea of misdeeds. Although you are the friend and benefactor of the whole world, I deemed you to be a kinsman and paid scant regard to you. I flaunted my wealth before you, who are

the God of gods. Although you were worthy of praise, you used to speak highly of me publicly, before an assembly of men. At that time I used to become puffed up and brag (566-570). O Lord, I have been guilty of such numerous lapses. So have mercy and bear with me, for my mistakes. How unworthy I am, even to beseech you like this, but like a father who forgives the lapses of his son without feeling joy or sorrow, so please condone all my misdeeds. Just as a friend suffers silently the impudence of a friend, so bear with me. Although one does not expect formalities from a close friend, still we made you wash our dinner plates. Pardon me for all such indignities heaped upon you (571-575). Just as when one meets his bosom friend, he does not hesitate to disclose his mind to him or a faithful wife solely devoted to her husband in body and soul, cannot but open her heart to him when she meets him, so I have implored you. There is one more thing, which I feel like asking you."

45. *Though glad I am to see what has not been seen before. My mind is distraught with fear. Show me, O God, that other form. Be merciful, O Lord of Gods, abode of the worlds.*

As an intimate friend I pressed you hard to reveal to me your cosmic form. You fulfilled my prayer with the affection of a parent. You indulged me with motherly love, as if you had planted the wish-yielding tree in my courtyard or given me the colt of the wish-yielding cow to play with (576-580) or presented me the stars or the moon to play the game of dice or ball. How hard it is to acquire even one drop of nectar! But you have indeed drenched me in *ambrosial* showers for four months and by preparing beds have sown philosophers' stones. Because of these many indulgences of yours, I have attained fulfillment and seen with my own eyes your universal form. The gods *Shiva* and *Brahma* had not even heard of this form and so how could they have a vision of it? You have laid bare before me, to my great joy, your inner essence, of which even the *Upanishads* did not get a glimpse. If I take stock of all my births, since the beginning of the epoch until now (581-585), I do not remember to have heard or seen this form. Reason even cannot reach its outskirts; how then can it delve into its inner essence? Then why talk of human eyes gazing on it? Verily none has set his eyes on it, none has even heard of it. But you revealed to me that form and filled my mind with ecstatic joy. But now I long to gossip with you, to enjoy your friendship and embrace you (586-590). But if I wish to do all this with your cosmic form, which of these countless faces shall I talk to, and how can I clasp in my arms your boundless form? It is not possible to race with the wind or hold the sky in one's arms, likewise how can one carry on water-sport in the sea? O God, this form fills me with dread. Please grant me this prayer and wind up your universal form. As a pilgrim after traversing the earth with joy, returns home to enjoy a settled life, so your four-armed figure is a haven of rest for us. All yogic practices lead to this figure and scriptural study also culminates in it (591-595). And all sacrificial acts, pilgrimages and acts of charity and merit come to fructification in this Divine figure. I am truly fond of this Divine figure and am impatiently waiting to have a sight of it. Pray help me out of this difficulty. O you, venerable God of gods, who knows the secrets in others' minds and who has founded this universe, pray grant me your grace and vouchsafe to me a vision of this Divine figure.

46. *I long to see you as before, with your diadem, mace and discus in hand. Please resume that four-armed form, O thousand-armed one, of universal form.*

The blue luster of that four-armed figure has bestowed colour to the blue lotus and the azure

sky and lent its splendour to the sapphire (596-600). It is as though emerald is exuding fragrance, or rapturous joy has sprouted arms and the cupid himself by playing in the lap of the Lord became a sight for sore eyes. The crown, which adorns the head of the Lord, looks more splendid because of your handsome head; truly the luster of your body adds splendour to the ornaments with which it is decked. *Shri Hari*, who is wearing the *Vaijayanti* necklace round his neck, looks handsome like a cloud in the midst of a rainbow. The mace in your hand makes a gift of salvation to the demons and softly lustrous is the discus held by you, in the other hand. I have become impatient to behold that figure and would implore you to resume it (601-605). My eyes are now satiated after feeding upon the feast of your cosmic form and are now longing to see your darkish figure. I like no other form better than this form of yours with attributes. Even the vision of your universal form looks less attractive to me than the sight of your human form. This handsome figure alone, gives both sensual pleasure as well as salvation, which no other form does. Therefore, O Lord, wind up this universal form and resume your form with attributes.

The blessed Lord said:

47. *By way of grace, O Arjuna, I have revealed to you, through My power of Yoga, the Supreme Cosmic form, which is effulgent, infinite and primeval, and which none else has seen before.*

At these words of Arjuna, the Lord was amazed and said. "I have never met a thoughtless person like you. You have witnessed a rare vision of unsurpassed grandeur; but you do not seem to exult in it. Instead you do not know that you are talking like an imprudent person out of fright (606-610). When I am propitious to a devotee, I bestow upon him only external gifts. But if I do not come across a truly devoted soul, to whom can I divulge the secret of My heart? But for your sake, I have wrought this universal form by bringing together all things in this world. I do not know how enchanted I am, by your devotional love, as a result of which, I have unfolded before the world, the colours of My most mysterious form. This form of Mine, which is beyond the reach of *Maya*, is limitless and from it has emanated Krishna and other incarnations. This form consists of the splendour of knowledge and is all-pervasive. It has no end and it is the firm foundation of the universe (611-615). No one except yourself has set his eyes on it or even heard about it, because it cannot be attained by any external means."

48. *Not by the study of the Vedas and sacrifices, nor by charity, nor by rituals, nor by mere austerities, could I be beheld in this form in the human world, by any but you, O great hero of the Kurus.*

When the *Vedas* sighted this form, they were struck dumb. Those who worshipped with sacrificial rites went up to heaven and returned (after their merit was exhausted). Those who took up *yogic* practices left them as too arduous, and those who studied the scriptures, did not develop a liking for this form. Those who followed the path of pious works, rushed forward eagerly for its attainment, but could only reach the precincts of *Satyaloka*. The ascetics, readily gave up their rigorous austerities, as soon as they caught a glimpse of the grandeur of the cosmic form. Thus this form remained beyond the reach of austerities also (616-620). Just as you saw it without any effort on your part, it has not come within the ken of any mortal. You are the one person who is worthy to possess this treasure of mystic vision, which is denied even to god *Brahma*.

49. *Do not fear or become bewildered by the sight of this awesome form of Mine. Shedding fear, with a cheerful heart, behold again that human form of Mine.*

Therefore, consider yourself as blessed by the vision of this cosmic form and cast off all fear. Do not cherish as better, any form other than this. If anyone chances upon a sea of nectar all of a sudden, would he leave it for fear of being drowned in it? Has anyone abandoned a mountain of gold on the ground that he cannot carry the load (621-625)? If anyone has come across a wish-fulfilling stone by good luck, does he throw it away because of its weight? Will anyone drive away the wish-yielding cow on the ground that he cannot feed her? If the moon were to visit somebody's house, will he turn it away complaining of its scorching heat? Will anyone reprove the sun, for casting a shadow and ask him to move away? Why should you feel disturbed, when My cosmic form with all its majestic grandeur, has come within your reach? O Arjuna, you are a bumpkin, who knows nothing. What can one say about you? O Arjuna, you are clasping a shadow instead of the substance. This four-armed figure is not My true Self. It is not proper, that you should cling to it with a restless mind (626-630). Even now, it is not too late to give up your penchant for this four-armed figure and concentrate on My cosmic form. Even if this universal form is dreadful and vast, pin your faith in it. Just as a miser moves outwardly in the world, keeping his mind on his treasure all the time or a mother bird soars in the sky leaving her heart with its fledglings in the nest or the cow grazes in the mountain with its mind on its calf tethered in the cowpen, so keep your mind fixed on the universal form (631-635) and meditate upon My four-armed figure for your mental satisfaction. But please do not forget what I have been telling you again and again and divert your mind from My Divine form. As you had never seen this Divine form before, you feel this terrible fright at its sight. Get rid of this fright and let your mind flow with passionate love for this Divine form. Lord Krishna, who had assumed the universal form said, 'O Arjuna, now see My former four-armed figure and be happy'.

Sanjaya said:

50. *Vasudeva (Krishna) having spoken thus, revealed again his previous human form. And seeing Partha terribly frightened, he reassured him, by resuming his gentle figure*

After saying this, the Lord resumed his human form (*Jnanadeva* says), there is nothing in this to wonder at, because Arjuna was fond of that form (636-640). Lord Krishna, who was the Supreme Self incarnate, had vouchsafed his essential being, like his cosmic form, to Arjuna, but it did not catch his fancy. This was just like discarding a thing after demanding it, or finding fault with a jewel or turning down a match on the ground that the girl did not attract one. So unbounded was Lord Krishna's love for Arjuna, that he lavished upon him his choicest gift, namely the cosmic form. Just as one fashions an ornament out of a gold bar and not liking it melts it, so the Lord assumed his cosmic form out of deep love for Arjuna and finding that Arjuna did not like it, resumed his human form (641-645). Where can one find a spiritual Master, who bears with his disciple and caters to his ardent desire? One cannot fathom this deep love of Lord Krishna for Arjuna.

He then withdrew his Divine luster, which had flooded the world and condensed it, in the human form. Just as all living creatures are merged in the Absolute, or the entire tree is stored in the seed or the dream vanishes in the waking state, so Lord Krishna compressed his cosmic

form in his incarnated form. It was as though, the sun's effulgence was absorbed in the sun's disc or the cloud was merged in the sky or as the tide subsided into the sea (646-650). The Lord, who had folded his cosmic form in the figure of Krishna, unfolded it, in order to please Arjuna. But when Arjuna, the customer, did not approve of the colour and texture and the length and breadth of the cloth unrolled before him, he folded it again. Then the cosmic form, which had enveloped the world by its vastness and grandeur appeared as a gentle and handsome human figure. In short, the Infinite took a finite form in order to reassure panic-stricken Arjuna. Arjuna was dazed like one, who suddenly awoke from a dream of his visit to heaven (651-655). Just as, with the *Guru's* grace, all worldly knowledge vanishes, giving place to the experience of *Brahman*, such was the state of Arjuna, when he beheld the human form of the Lord. At that time, his heart rejoiced that the curtain of the cosmic form was drawn back to reveal his human form. At the sight of this form, Arjuna felt immense relief, as if he had scored a victory over death or had escaped unscathed from a hurricane, or had swam across the seven seas, paddling with his arms. Then he saw the earth, peopled with its inhabitants like the stars, which slowly come into view after sunset (656-660). When he cast his eyes around, he saw the same *Kurukshetra*, where the same kinsmen arrayed in both the armies, were hurling weapons at one another. He also saw his chariot, standing at the same place, under the canopy of the arrows hurled by them, Lord Krishna seated in front and himself standing down the chariot.

Arjuna said:

51. *Seeing again this gentle form of yours, O oppressor of foes, I have now come to my senses and restored to my normal state.*

In this way, the heroic Arjuna saw the human form of the Lord, he had prayed for and said to himself, "I have now regained my lost courage. My knowledge had parted from my intellect and had strayed into wilderness. My mind had absconded along with my ego, all the senses had stopped their functions, my speech was struck dumb and my body had got into a wretched state (661-665). Now all these have come into their own and have resumed their work. The sight of this incarnated form of the Lord has revived them." Then in a transport of joy, he said to Lord Krishna, "O God of gods, I have feasted my eyes on your human form. You have put heart into me, by revealing this form to me like a mother who reassures her child who had strayed way, by feeding it at the breast. I was treading the water briskly in the sea of the cosmic form and reached the shore of your four-armed image. O friend, dwelling in *Dwarka*, you have not only given me the vision of this form, but have watered my Soul, which was drying up like a tree (666-670). O Lord, I, thirsting for the sight of your human form, have now come upon this ocean of nectar and I am reassured that I shall breathe freely now. The creeper in the form of an ecstatic joy is now planted in the bed of my heart and I am enjoying to my heart's content, its fruit of bliss.

The blessed Lord said:

52. *Very difficult it is to see this (universal) form of Mine, as you have seen. Of this form even the gods ever long to have a glimpse.*

Hearing this, Lord Krishna said, 'What foolishness is this? Have you forgotten so soon my

instruction? I told you to pin your love in the cosmic form and then come to meet My four-armed figure physically. O, undiscerning Arjuna, you had come across the golden mountain of *Meru*, but you misconceived it to be of no account and spurned it (671-675)'. *Lord Shiva* did not get even a glimpse of My cosmic form, even after performing rigorous penance. O Arjuna, even the *yogis*, who mortify their flesh by the practice of eight-fold Yoga, do not get a chance to gaze at this form. The gods spend their whole life-time in anxiety as to how to get a glimpse of this form. Just as the *chataka* bird scans the horizon greedily for the cloud, so gods eagerly remain speculating all the time whether they will get a vision of this cosmic form (676-680). But this great vision, which they could not see even in a dream, came within your easy reach.

53. *Not by the Vedas nor by austerities, nor by charity nor by sacrifice, can I be seen in this form, as you have beheld me.*

But O Arjuna, there are no pathways which can lead you to this vision. It is for this reason that the *Vedas*, along with the six *shastras*, backed away from it, in despair. O great archer, even many rigorous penances cannot get a chance to come in the presence of it. No one can get even a glimpse of it, through charitable gifts or sacrificial rites. Keep in mind that there is only one way to gain this vision. A mind absorbed in devotional love alone, leads to it unfailingly (681-685).

54. *Only through exclusive devotion, can I be known in this form, O Arjuna, and seen truly and entered into, O scorcher of the foes.*

The nature of this devotion is like this. Just as the showers dropped from a cloud cannot but reach the earth, or as the river Ganges, along with all streams, goes in search of the sea and eventually joins it, so, he who loves Me with exclusive and unflinching devotion attains to Me and becomes one with Me. Like the *Milky Sea* which is equally sweet at the shores, as also in the middle, I am the same to all. When he has no other object of worship other than My Divine essence, which he sees in all created beings, right from the ant (686-690), at that moment, he will fully comprehend My cosmic form and get a true vision of Me. Just as when firewood is ignited, it is consumed by fire and becomes fire without leaving even a trace of its name or the sky remains in the dark until sunrise, but becomes lit up everywhere after sunrise, so with the vision of My divine form, egoism is destroyed and along with it the notion of duality also vanishes. At that moment, he comes to know that he and the universe are essentially nothing but My Divine Self. In short, he is united with Me and becomes one with Me (691-695).

55. *He who works for Me, with Me as his Supreme goal, who is devoted to Me and detached and is without hatred towards any creature, he comes unto Me, O son of Pandu (Arjuna).*

Such a devotee performs all his works for Me and dedicates them to Me. He holds nothing in this world more dear to him than Myself and regards Me as the goal of his life. He sees Me in all beings, forgetful of their very names, and free from any ill-will towards them, worships Me in them. When such a devotee departs from his body, he merges into My being and becomes My very Self.

Sanjaya said, 'Thus spoke Lord Krishna, who has become big-bellied with the incorporation of the world in it. The Lord uttered these words filled with pathos (656-700)'. Then Arjuna,

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full of ecstatic joy and skillful in the art of devotion, began to scan both the forms of the Lord. But he preferred his human form as more beneficial, than the universal form, but the Lord did not attach much importance to this view. He tried to demonstrate with one or two ingenious arguments that his human form, being confined to a body is not truer than his all-pervading form. Then Arjuna said to himself, 'I must ask him which of these two forms is better (701-705)'. Reflecting thus, Arjuna will proceed to question the Lord in a befitting manner. *Jnanadeva* says, I shall narrate that tale in simple *ovi* verses, in a pleasing manner; listen carefully and enjoy it. Full of piety and faith, I shall fill my joined palms with loose flowers, in the form of verses and offer them at the feet of the Divine form (706-708).

