

CHAPTER 11

THE UNIVERSAL FORM

Connection between Chapter 10 and Chapter 11

- After hearing Krishna's words in Chapter 10 that "With a single fragment of Myself, I pervade and support the entire universe" (10.42), Arjuna wishes to see that all pervasive form of the Lord.
- Although Krishna is driving Arjuna's chariot, He pervades and supports the entire universe. Arjuna therefore wishes to see Krishna's all-pervading form. Thus, after two introductory verses, Arjuna asks Krishna to reveal His universal form.

BREAKDOWN OF CHAPTER 11

SECTION I (11.1 – 11.8) — ARJUNA'S REQUEST AND KRISHNA'S DESCRIPTION OF HIS UNIVERSAL FORM

- Arjuna requests Krishna to show him the all-pervading, universal form
- Krishna first describes His universal form and then bestows upon Arjuna the vision necessary to see it

SECTION II (11.9 – 11.31) — SANJAYA'S DESCRIPTION OF ARJUNA'S VISION

- Arjuna beholds Krishna's universal form with astonishment
- He hesitatingly begins to describe what he sees.
- First he sees all existence, immeasurable, with great radiance, in one place within this form
- Second he also sees Krishna's frightening, all destructive *kala-rupa* or 'form of time'
- Arjuna then asks this form, "What is Your mission? Who are You?"

SECTION III (11.32 – 11.34) — "TIME I AM, BECOME MY INSTRUMENT"

- Krishna replies, "Time I am, the destroyer of the world. The great warriors on both sides are already slain by My plan. You can be but an instrument. Arise and fight!"

SECTION IV (11.35 – 11.46) — ARJUNA'S PRAYERS

- Arjuna, trembling, prays to Krishna's Universal form
- Begs His forgiveness for having previously, in ignorance, treated the Lord as friend
- Fearfully requests Him to regain His two-armed form as Supreme Personality of Godhead

SECTION V (11.47 – 11.55) — ONLY PURE DEVOTEES SEE KRISHNA'S TWO-ARMED FORM

- Krishna withdraws His Universal Form
- Krishna shows four-armed form
- Finally shows two-armed form
- Krishna's most wonderful two-armed form can be directly seen only by pure undivided devotional service

SECTION I (11.1 – 11.8) ARJUNA'S REQUEST & KRISHNA'S DESCRIPTION OF HIS UNIVERSAL FORM

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION I

One understands the Lord's nature through the mercy of the Lord.

SUBSECTION A: Text 11.1 – 11.4: Arjuna's request

SUBSECTION B: Text 11.5 – 11.8: Krishna's description

Text 11.1

THEME: Arjuna acknowledges Krishna's grace – By hearing everything that Krishna has said, Arjuna's illusion has been removed

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.1

- (a) **Effect of hearing** "most confidential knowledge" – all illusion is dispelled
- Power of Krishna's grace – Arjuna recognizes Krishna's grace by which the illusion is dispelled
 - What illusion is dispelled – "that Krishna is an ordinary friend or a human being"
 - One should know that Krishna is the source of everything and in everyone's heart as Supersoul
 - Krishna's supremacy over all – Chapter 11 reveals Krishna as the cause of all causes: cause of material nature, cause of all living entities, all demigods, even cause of *Maha-Vishnu* and all incarnations
- (b) **Why Arjuna requests Krishna to show His Universal Form** (*Refer to Text 11.3 'Focus of Learning'*)

Text 11.2

THEME: Arjuna expresses his understanding that "Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead"

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.2

- (a) **Addresses Krishna as 'lotus-eyed'** – Out of joy ; after being assured by Krishna that:
- He is the source of all creation, maintenance and destruction (As explained in *Bg.* 7.6 – 7.7)
 - "He is still aloof" (Inconceivable opulence as explained in *Bg.* 9.4 – 9.5)

Text 11.3

THEME: Arjuna expresses his desire to see – Arjuna has heard that Krishna, who stands before him on the chariot, supports and pervades the entire universe (*Bg.* 10.42); and thus Arjuna expresses his desire to see that form

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.3

(a) **Why Arjuna requests Krishna to show His Universal Form (4 points):**

1. To establish Krishna's divinity for all (11.1 purport)
2. To convince others, although he does not have any personal desire and is completely satisfied to see Him in His personal form of Krishna (11.3 purport)
 - Lord is addressed as Purushottama – Implies that Lord as Supreme Personality of Godhead, knows the heart of Arjuna, that **he has no personal desire to see**
3. To avoid imposters - Wants to set a criteria for in the future there will be so many imposters who will pose as incarnations of God (11.3 purport)
4. Arjuna, as a responsibility, wants to substantiate Krishna's statement – so that in the future people can understand that Krishna “not only theoretically or philosophically”, but ‘actually’ presented Himself as such to Arjuna – Arjuna fulfils his responsibility because he is the beginning of the Parampara (11.8 purport)

Text 11.4*

THEME: Arjuna pleads and does not order – Arjuna requests to see Krishna in His form pervading the entire universe (Unlimited Universal-self), only if, Arjuna is ‘qualified’ to see such a form and thus Arjuna is not ordering Krishna

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.4

(a) **Qualification to see the Lord**

- Only by revelation by the mercy of the Lord – Therefore Arjuna requests and pleads and not orders
- Not possible by “mental speculation” or “perception by material senses”
 - Because living entity as infinitesimal spiritual spark ,cannot know unlimited infinite
 - Arjuna admits his limitations as a living entity and acknowledges Krishna's inestimable position
- Lord is addressed as ‘**Yogesvara**’ –
 - To point out His inconceivable potencies by which the infinite can reveal to the finite
 - Krishna is not obliged to reveal Himself until one ‘fully surrenders’ in Krishna consciousness and engages in transcendental loving service

Texts 11.5 – 11.8

Krishna's Description

COMMON THEME: Krishna responds by offering to show Arjuna, the opulences He described in Chapter 10



PLEASE NOTE: All points of the purports are included as the sub-points; as such there are no individual ‘Focus of Learning’ sections for these verses.


KRISHNA'S DESCRIPTION OF HIS OWN UNIVERSAL FORM

- ❖ **Krishna shows variegated forms** – “See My Opulences!, Hundreds and thousands of varied divine and multicoloured forms” (11.5)
 - Universal form is transcendental but temporary because it is subject to the temporary time of material nature (Is manifested and unmanifested like material nature) (11.5)
 - Not eternally situated in spiritual sky (11.5)
 - Universal Form is not possible to be seen by ordinary men – Krishna must give one the power to see it (11.5)
- ❖ **Wonderful forms** with different manifestations of Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Asvini-kumaras and all other demigods
- ❖ **No-one has ever seen or heard of this before** (11.6)
 - Even Arjuna, a personal friend and most advanced learned man, did not know all about Krishna (11.6)
- ❖ **Could see the entire universe (All moving and non-moving) sitting at one place** (11.7*)
 - Even most advanced scientist cannot see other parts of universe, which a pure devotee could see so easily (11.7*)
- ❖ **Could see past, present and future**, all what Arjuna wanted to see (11.7*)
 - Thus Arjuna will be shown the future destiny of all the relatives and warriors and thus will be motivated to just become an instrument (11.7*)
- ❖ **Needed divine vision** – Cannot be seen with the present eyes (11.8*)
 - Pure devotees do not like to see Krishna in any form, other than His two-handed form
 - Therefore Arjuna is told not to change the mind, but change the eyes by Krishna's grace (11.8*)

SUMMARIZED THEME 11A (Extracted from 11.8 purport)
Devotees correctly situated in transcendental relationships
are attracted by loving features and not by godless display of opulences


- A) **Playmates and parents of Krishna in Vrindavan** did not even know that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead *because* they are so immersed in pure love for Krishna
- B) **Ref. SB 10.12.11** – The Supreme person is considered *impersonal Brahman* by great sages; *Supreme Personality of Godhead* by devotees and *a product of material nature* by ordinary men. Now these boys who have performed many many pious activities in their past lives are playing with the Supreme Personality of Godhead

SECTION II (11.9 – 11.31) SANJAYA'S DESCRIPTION OF ARJUNA'S VISION

 **LINK BETWEEN SECTION I & SECTION II:** Until this point, Krishna has only spoken about the universal form. In the next verse Krishna gives Arjuna “*divya-cakshuh*”, the divine eyes that will allow Arjuna to see it

Texts 11.9* – 11.14

COMMON THEME: Sanjaya is empowered to describe Arjuna's vision (11.9) as follows


 **PLEASE NOTE:** All points of the purports are included as the sub-points; as such there are no individual ‘Focus of Learning’ sections for these verses.

SANJAYA'S DESCRIPTION OF UNIVERSAL FORM

- ❖ **Unlimited divine, wondrous and brilliant forms (11.10* – 11.11*)**
 - Unlimited mouths, eyes, ornaments, weapons, garlands etc
 - By inconceivable potency of the Lord, Arjuna could see the unlimited sitting in one place
- ❖ **More radiant than hundreds and thousands of suns (11.12)**
 - Sanjaya is trying to give a mental picture of indescribable revelation to Dhrtarashtra
 - Grace of Vyasadeva – Sanjaya, by grace of Vyasa, could see all that happened in Kurukshetra
- ❖ **Seeing everything at one place** – All unlimited expansions of the universe including planets of gold, jewels and all other kinds (11.13)
 - The word 'tatra' (There) – indicates Arjuna and Krishna were sitting on the chariot and seeing everything from one place.
 - Others on the battlefield could not see – Because Krishna gave the vision only to Arjuna
- ❖ **Arjuna is bewildered and astonished** – Hair standing on end, Arjuna bows down and begins to pray with folded hands (11.14)
 - Text 11.14 describes the **change of rasa from 'friendship' to 'wonder'**
 - This proves that Krishna is the reservoir of all relationships (12 rasas)
 - Symptoms of wonder – indicated by a calm, sober and quiet personality being changed to ecstatic, astonished personality with hairs standing on end and offering prayers with folded hands

Texts 11.15 – 11.19

COMMON THEME: Arjuna speaks 'his realisations' of the Universal Form

 **PLEASE NOTE:** All points of the purports are included as the sub-points; as such there are no individual 'Focus of Learning' sections for these verses.


ARJUNA'S DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL FORM

- ❖ **All living entities at one place** – See's all demigods and living entities assembled in that form – Lord Brahma sitting on a lotus flower, also Lord Siva and all the sages and divine serpents (11.15)
 - To see all at one place is possible only by Krishna's grace
- ❖ **Krishna is unlimited** – See's many many arms, bellies, mouths, eyes without any limit and with no end, middle and beginning (11.16)
 - Through Him, everything could be seen
- ❖ **Blazing like sun (11.17) –**
 - *Analogy:* Glaring effulgence on all sides like a blazing fire or immeasurable radiance like the sun
 - This form is very difficult to see
- ❖ **Arjuna attempts to describe immeasurable** – He is trying to say "You are the Supreme Lord" by the following statements: (11.18*)
 - You are the Supreme primal objective
 - Ultimate resting place of all the universe
 - Inexhaustible / oldest
 - Maintainer of eternal religion
- ❖ **Sun and moon are your eyes (11.19)**

Texts 11.19 – 11.31

Now Arjuna describes Kala-rupa

COMMON THEME: Text 11.19 marks the beginning of description of '**Kala-rupa**' (The form as Time) which continues up till Text 11.31

 **PLEASE NOTE:** All points of the purports are included as the sub-points; as such there are no individual 'Focus of Learning' sections for these verses.

ARJUNA'S FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL FORM AS 'KALA-RUPA'.

- ❖ **Blazing fire coming forth** from your mouth, burning this entire universe (11.19)
 - Numberless arms and sun and moon are the eyes
 - Without origin, middle and end
 - Repetition of glories is not a flaw – It is a sign of bewilderment, wonder or great ecstasy
- ❖ **Spread throughout** – Spread throughout the sky and planets and all space in between; and all the planetary systems are perturbed seeing you (11.20)
 - '*Dyav-a-prthivyoh*' (Space between heaven and earth) and '*Loka-trayam*' (Three worlds) – indicate that not only Arjuna saw, but other planetary systems, whoever endowed with divine vision, also saw this form and got perturbed
 - This proves that Arjuna's seeing was not a dream
- ❖ **Petitioned by demigods** – Kala-rupa is petitioned by demigods and sages – All are fearful (11.21 – 11.22)
 - Demigods are surrendering and praying with folded hands
 - Great sages are praying with Vedic hymns
 - Siva, Adityas, Vasus etc beholding You in wonder
- ❖ **Rasa changes to fear** – Arjuna experiences a terrible fearsome sight (11.23)
 - Arjuna loses steadiness and equilibrium of mind, because mind is perturbed by fear (11.24)
 - Arjuna sees blazing death-like faces and awful teeth (11.25)
 - **Link between texts 11.25 & 11.26:** Text 11.26 through 11.30 describe future occurrences that Arjuna sees within the *kala-rupa*. In Text 11.7, Krishna said that Arjuna could see “whatever [he] may want to see in the future.” In these texts, Arjuna sees that Bhishma, Drona and Karna – the three most feared members of the opposing army – will be destroyed.
- ❖ **Two Analogies:** Devouring all soldiers of both armies on both sides, including Bhishma, Drona & Karna, rushing into Your mouth (11.26 – 11.27)
 - *Analogy:* As many waves of river flow into the ocean (11.28)
 - *Analogy:* As moths dash to destruction in blazing fire (11.29*)
 - **Indicates that Arjuna could see his awaited victory**
- ❖ **All-devouring** – You are devouring all people from all sides, your effulgence is covering all the universe with terrible scorching rays(11.30)

ARJUNA'S QUESTIONS

- ❖ **Arjuna in great fear asks two questions** (11.31)
 - Who are You?
 - What is Your mission?
- ❖ **Why Arjuna asks these questions** – Because although Arjuna knew Krishna as his friend and Supreme Personality of Godhead, but he was puzzled by various forms exhibited by Krishna

SECTION III (11.32 – 11.34) “TIME I AM, BECOME MY INSTRUMENT”

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF TEXT 11.32 – 11.34

- As the Supersoul, Lord Krishna controls all cosmic events according to His will
- As Time, He is pushing all things towards destruction

Text 11.32*

THEME: Krishna in the form of Universal Time replies to Arjuna's two questions

- ❖ "Time I am" (Kala-rupa)
- ❖ **Mission** – To destroy everything – "All the people in all the worlds, except Pandavas"
- ❖ **Indicates** – Even if Arjuna did not want to fight, they will die anyway
 - *Ref. Katha Upanisad* – All *brahmanas*, *ksatriyas* and everyone else are devoured like a meal by the Supreme as the All-devouring giant

⚡ **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 11.32 & 11.33:** Theme of Texts 11.33 & 11.34 mentions Krishna's instructions to Arjuna

Text 11.33*

THEME: "I have already destroyed all your enemies – become My instrument and win glory"

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.33

- (a) "**Savya-saci**" – Means one who fights ambidextrously (i.e with the left or right hand)
 - Or one who can shoot arrows very expertly
- (b) "**Nimitta-matram**" – Become an instrument
- (c) **Sign of intelligence** – To recognise that the whole world is moving under the plan of the Lord
 - Fools mentality – No plan behind the creation ; All are accidental formations
 - Scientists say – "Perhaps" or "Maybe" –but all are foolish ideas
- (d) **Lord's plan** – Very specific in material world
 - Purpose of comic manifestation – chance to go back to Godhead
 - *Till we have* the mentality to lord over, we are conditioned
 - Creation and destruction are under Lord's law
 - Sign of most intelligence – Cultivate Krishna consciousness and know the plan of the Lord
- (e) **Thus Arjuna is motivated to:**
 - Fight in accordance with the desire of the Lord
 - This is the "Path of real happiness and real perfection"

Text 11.34*

THEME: Arjuna is "told to fight and be victorious and enjoy the kingdom". Why? Because:

- ❖ Krishna desires the battle, Indicated by the words 'Know My plan' – "I have already killed them"
- ❖ Perform your duty – "Do not be disturbed"
- ❖ '*Jeta asi*' – indicates "You will be victorious"
- ❖ Get the credit of being "My instrument"

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.34

- (a) **How to know the plan of the Lord**
 - Only possible by the Lord's mercy
 - The plan of His devotees are as good as His plans
 - Thus act in Krishna consciousness to know His plan through medium of the spiritual master
- (b) **Kindness and the mercy of the Lord**
 - Every plan is made by the Supreme Personality of Godhead
 - But the Lord is very kind and merciful and wants to give credit to His devotees, if one carries out the plan according to His desire

SECTION IV (11.35 – 11.46) ARJUNA'S PRAYERS

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION IV

Lord Krishna is the Supreme Lord of all. He is simultaneously involved in an intimate relationship of love with His pure devotees

Texts 11.35 – 11.46

COMMON THEME: Arjuna prays in faltering voice

- ❖ In which mood – as a devotee **in the mood of 'wonder'** (11.35)



PLEASE NOTE: The main points refer to Arjuna's Prayers. The subpoints include all points of the purports; as such there are no individual 'Focus of Learning' sections for these verses.

ARJUNA'S PRAYERS

- (a) **Arjuna recognizes Krishna's action as All-good for everyone** after hearing from Krishna the outcome of battlefield and observing Universal form and response of demigods and demons (11.36)
 - The world becomes joyful on hearing Your name and everyone becomes attached to You
 - You are worshiped by great souls and demons are afraid and flee away
- (b) **Krishna is worshipable by everyone** – "You rightly deserve the obeisances of everyone" (11.37) because:
 - You are the God of all the Gods, the original creator, especially even greater than Brahma, secondary creator
 - Invincible source of all and cause of all causes
 - Transcendental to material manifestations
 - **'Aksaram'** – not perishable like material creation)
 - **'Mahatma'** – Most magnanimous and unlimited
 - **'Ananta'** – Nothing is not covered by Lord's influence and energy
 - **'Devesa'** – He is the controller of demigods and is above them all
- (c) **You are the ultimate rest of everything and all knowledge** (11.38)
 - **'Nidhanam'** – Ultimate rest even from Brahman.
 - Knower of everything in this world and You are all that is knowable
 - Object of all knowledge because You are All pervading
- (d) **You are the essence of everything (11.39)**
 - You are air (Air being all-pervasive is the most important representation of the demigods)
 - You are fire, water, moon
 - You are Brahma (*Pitamaha*) / You are *Prapitamaha* (because He is the father of Brahmaji)
 - You are the Supreme controller
- (e) **I offer you obeisances from front, behind and from all sides** (11.40)
 - Arjuna is offering obeisances out of loving ecstasy, accepting that "He is the master of limitless power" and "He is far superior to all the great warriors assembled on the battlefield" (*Ref. Visnu Purana* – All have been created by you, any demigod or anyone)

ARJUNA'S PRAYERS continued...

- (f) **Begs forgiveness for treating Krishna, the Infallible One, as an ordinary friend (11.41* – 11.42*)**
- Not knowing Krishna's glories, Arjuna feels that he has offended Krishna in 'madness' or in 'love', and begs to be excused for many informal gestures like,
 - Called Krishna as Yadava or Krishna or dishonoured him many times.
 - Jesting as we relaxed
 - Lay on the same bed / sat / ate together
 - Never knew Krishna could accept such a Universal form
 - Cannot forget the relationship of a friend – The relationship between a living-entity and Krishna is fixed eternally, it cannot be forgotten, as evident from Arjuna's behaviour
- (g) **You are the supreme father (11.43)**
- Supreme spiritual master – Gave this knowledge to Brahma / Arjuna
 - You are the greatest – No-one is greater than or equal to You nor can anyone be one with You.
- References for Lord's Supreme greatness:
- No difference between Krishna's body and self (*Ref. Svetasvatara Upanisad 6.8*)
 - Senses are interchangeable
 - Birth and activities are transcendental (*Bg. 4.9*)
 - Krishna is one God – All the living entities are His servants, no-one can deny His order (*Ref. CC "ekale ishvara..."*)
 - Cause of all causes (*Ref. Brahma Samhita 5.1*)
- (h) **Falls to the ground and begs for mercy** – Requests Him to tolerate all wrong-doings (11.44) just like –
- Analogies:*
- Father – Tolerates the impudence of his son
 - Friend – Impertinence of a friend
 - "Krishna – Arjuna" relationship is that of friendship
 - Wife – Familiarity of her partner
- (i) **Requests to withdraw the fearsome Form and reveal the form as Personality of Godhead (11.45)**
- Indicates Arjuna is 'afraid' and 'joyful' simultaneously
 - Afraid because of so many offenses committed
 - Joyful because He is gladdened by knowing his Friend's opulence as Supreme Personality of Godhead and His ability to show the Universal Form
 - It proves that Krishna can assume any form, as He is asked here to show His Narayana Form
 - Universal Form is a temporary Form; but Vaikuntha form is transcendental, four-handed and eternal.
 - Different Narayanas are named according to the different configurations of the four hands
 - Arjuna's request to see the four-handed form indicates that **All the forms are one with Krishna**
- (j) **Wants to see the four-handed form (11.46)**
- Texts 11.45 & 11.46 indicate that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and He is the source of all forms and incarnations (*Ref. Brahma Samhita 5.39*)
 - This verse establishes without any doubt the statement of Srimad Bhagavatam that Krishna is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead
 - Constant feature in these forms – He is always fresh like a young man
 - He is non-different from His plenary expansions
 - He is God in any of His innumerable forms

SECTION V (11.47 – 11.55)
ONLY PURE DEVOTEES SEE KRISHNA'S TWO-ARMED FORM

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION V

The most intimate feature of the Absolute Truth is two-armed form of Sri Krishna. This Form is only known through devotional service

Text 11.47

THEME: Krishna says "I have shown you this Universal form which no-one else has ever seen before"

- ❖ By 'My' internal potency
- ❖ Happily by 'My' desire

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.47

- (a) **By 'My' internal potency** – because inconceivable by human speculation
- (b) **Happily by 'My' desire because 'no-one has ever seen this before'**
 - All disciplic devotees of the Lord could see the form which was shown to Arjuna by Krishna's mercy (e.g. other devotees in planets in outer space and in heavenly planets)
 - Forms shown to Duryodhana were 'not' the complete forms and were different from this Universal Form

Text 11.48

THEME: Glorifies '*bhakti*' by negation – This Universal form cannot be seen by personal efforts like studying the Vedas, performing sacrifices, charity, pious activities or penances

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.48

- (a) **Who can have this divine vision** – Only godly souls
- (b) **Who is a Godly person** (Status like a demigod) – 'Only devotees' can have such divinity (Ref. Vedic scriptures)
 - **Other qualifications are insufficient** – By methods like 'charity' / 'penance' / '*Veda-yajnadhyayanaih*' (Vedic study and sacrificial regulations), one cannot qualify to have that divine vision. These methods include:
 - '*Vedas*' – Four Vedas, eighteen Puranas, Upanishads, Vedanta-sutra
 - '*Sutras*' – (Kalpa-sutra, Mimamsa-sutra) – for studying the method of sacrifice
 - 'Pious activities' – Agnihotra sacrifice and prescribed duties for different caste
 - '*Tapasya*' – Voluntary acceptance of some bodily pains
 - 'Charity' ('*Danaih*') – Charity to suitable party who is engaged in transcendental loving service (brahmanas and vaisnavas)
 - Even the Impersonalists who are imagining seeing the Universal form – Are unable to see because *Bhagavad-gita* explains that Impersonalists are not devotees.

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.48 continued...

- (c) **'Atheist' in contrast to Godly persons** – Atheists cannot have such divinity, therefore they cannot have the vision to see the Lord
- They do not believe in Vishnu
 - Or recognize only the impersonal part of Krishna as Supreme
- (d) **Devotees do not want to see the Universal Form**, although they are qualified to see
- (e) **Practical application: Text 11.48 helps to refute pseudo incarnations**
- Followers of a pseudo incarnation may say that they have also seen the Universal Form
 - But without becoming a devotee of 'Krishna' one cannot see the Universal Form of God

Text 11.49

THEME: 'Let this vision be over' – Krishna says, "This fearsome form has disturbed your mind, therefore let this vision be over"

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.49

- (a) **One of the purposes of the Universal form** – Krishna wanted to show that Bhishma, Drona *etc.* have already been killed by Him
- Because they were silent when Draupadi was disrobed (Thus they deserve to be killed)
 - Also, this was shown to Arjuna because devotees are always peaceful and cannot perform such horrible action
- (b) **Why are devotees not interested in the Universal form**
- Because it does not allow them to reciprocate loving feelings
 - A devotee either wants to offer respectful worshipful feelings or
 - Reciprocate in loving service to Supreme Personality of Godhead in two-handed form

Text 11.50

THEME: Then Krishna shows transcendental four-armed form, then two-armed form (Saumya-vapuh)

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.50

- (a) **Similar example of change of forms** – Krishna appears to Vasudeva and Devaki as four-handed Narayana form and then transformed into an ordinary child
- (b) **'Saumya-vapuh'** –
- Indicates a very beautiful form – Krishna's form is the most beautiful form
 - Who can see this form – *Ref. Brahma Samhita 5.38 "premanjana..."* – *Only one whose eyes are smeared with the ointment of love can see this beautiful form*
 - Krishna shows this form because He knows Arjuna's ultimate interest is not even the four-handed form

Text 11.51

THEME: Arjuna is pacified – Arjuna’s mind is pacified and restored on seeing Krishna’s two-handed form

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.51

- (a) **‘Manusam-rupam’** – Indicates Lord to be two-armed, but not an ordinary person
- (b) **This verse refutes the following argument:**
 - Arguments:
 - “Krishna is an ordinary human” and
 - “It is impersonal Brahman within Krishna who is speaking”
 - Refutation: To think so, is the greatest injustice. How can an ordinary human show the Universal form and again the four-handed form
- (c) **Analogy:** Gita verses are like sun and does not need any lamplight
 - Therefore pure devotees are not confused by misguided commentaries

Text 11.52

THEME: Two-handed form is more difficult to see than the Universal Form (indicated by the word ‘*Surdarsam*’) – even demigods desire to see this form which is so dear

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.52

- (a) **Tinge of bhakti is enough for Universal Form –**
 - Universal Form may be seen by adding a tinge of *bhakti* to activities like *Vedic sacrifices, penances, Vedic study, jnana etc.*
 - Without a tinge of Bhakti it is not possible
- (b) **Krishna’s two-handed form is still more difficult to see**
 - Even for demigods like Lord Shiva or Lord Brahma
 - *e.g.* Demigods were eager to see Krishna in the womb of Devaki
 - Foolish mentality (*Ref. Bg. 9.11*)
 - They deride Him as ordinary
 - May offer respect not to Him but to the impersonal “something” within Him, but these are all non-sensical postures
 - Krishna’s body is described in ‘*Brahma Samhita*’ and the ‘*Bhagavad-gita*’ as completely spiritual
 - His body is never like material body

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.52 continued...

(c) **Different processes to know Absolute Truth**

- Materialistic calculation of the Supreme Lord
 - Consider Krishna to be a great historical personality and a very learned philosopher
 - But an ordinary man
 - Even though He was so powerful, but had to accept a material body
 - Ultimately Absolute Truth is impersonal, therefore they think that from His impersonal feature, He assumed a personal feature attached to material nature
- Speculative calculation of the Supreme Lord
 - Those are in search of knowledge also speculate on Krishna
 - Consider Him to be less important than Universal form of the Supreme
 - Think Personal form of the Supreme is something imaginary
 - Believe, in ultimate issue – Absolute Truth is not a person
- Transcendental Process – described in Bg. Chapter 4
 - Actual Vedic Process – ‘Repeated hearing from authorities’
 - Also when Krishna reveals by removing yoga-maya
 - *Ref. Vedic Literature:* For one who is surrendered soul, Absolute Truth can actually be understood
 - Spiritual eyes can be opened by ‘continuous Krishna Consciousness’ and ‘devotional service’
 - Such revelation is not possible even for demigods
 - Advanced demigods are always hoping to see Krishna in His two-handed form

Text 11.53*

THEME: This verse glorifies *bhakti* by negation – Two-armed form cannot be seen by any endeavor.

- ❖ Not by studying Vedas, serious penances, charity or worship

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.53

(a) **Krishna appeared as four-handed before Devaki and Vasudeva and then transformed into His two-handed form:**

- This mystery is difficult to understand by atheists and those devoid of devotional service
- Neither by scholars who have simply studied by way of
 - Grammatical knowledge or
 - Mere academic qualifications
- Neither by official visits to Temple to worship
- Only by path of Devotional service – This is told in the next verse

Text 11.54*

This verse directly glorifies *Bhakti*

THEME: Krishna can be revealed only by pure devotional service

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.54

- (a) **Speculative process to understand Krishna is a waste of time**
- (b) **Understanding Krishna**
- **What is difficult to understand** – That “He came from parents in four-handed form and at once changed to two-handed form”
 - **Which methods make it difficult** – Difficult to understand by ‘study of Vedas’ or ‘Philosophical Speculations’
 - Cannot understand Krishna by mental speculation
 - Must take personal training under the guidance of bonafide spiritual master, otherwise impossible to even begin to understand Krishna
 - ‘tu’ – indicates that ‘no other process’ can be used or recommended, or can be successful in understanding Krishna
 - **Who can learn about Him** – “Experienced students of Vedic literature” can learn about Him in so many ways
 - So many rules and regulation and if one at all wants to understand Krishna, he must follow regulative principles of authoritative scriptures
 - Perform penance according to those principles – Fasting on Janmashtami and ekadashi
 - Charity – To devotees of Krishna engaged in His devotional service. Krishna Consciousness is a benediction to humanity, e.g. Lord Chaitanya was called most munificent for the freely distributed charity of ‘Love of God’
 - Deity Worship in Temples – specially for beginners in devotional service to Lord
 - *Ref. Svetasvatara Upanishad* – “*yasya deve...*” – Supreme Personality of
- (c) **Who can write commentaries** – The word ‘na’ in Text 53 indicates “One should not be proud of such credentials (as given in text 53), but must take to devotional service” – only then one can attempt to write commentaries
- (d) **All forms come from Krishna** –
- Indicated by Krishna’s changing forms from Universal form to four-handed and then to two-handed form.
 - Krishna is distinct from these forms, then what to speak of impersonal conceptions
- (e) **Knowing Krishna means knowing the Vedas** – Knowing Me as Krishna, ‘the Supreme Personality of Godhead’, implies knowing all the Vedas *e.g.*,
- *Gopal-Tapani Upanisad*
 - Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead
 - He has sac-cid-ananda form
 - Understanding Him implies understanding the Vedas and He is the Supreme Master
 - Has unlimited forms and incarnations
 - *Brahma-Samhita 5.1 / 5.48* says Maha-vishnu also comes from Krishna
 - *Bg. 7.7 / 10.2 / 10.12 – 10.13*: Krishna’s form is the Supreme most
 - *SB 1.3.28* “*Ete camsa-kalah...*” – All incarnations come from Krishna
- (f) **Universal Form is not attractive to pure devotees** who are in love with the Lord
- (g) **Universal Form is not the original form** – it is only good for persons involved in elevating themselves by fruitive activities, and to draw attention of those who have no love of God

Text 11.55*

THIS VERSE IS CONSIDERED THE ESSENCE OF BHAGAVAD GITA

**Because anyone who wants to approach the Supreme, in Krishnaloka
in the spiritual sky, in intimate connection, must take this formula**

THEME: Only most purified devotional service free from *Jnana* and *Karma*, executed without envy can bring one to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead



PLEASE NOTE: Some points of the purports are included as the sub-points; under the characteristics motioned below. The remaining points of the purport are covered in the 'Focus of Learning' box thereafter.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCH DEVOTIONAL SERVICE (ANANYA-BHAKTI) ARE:

1. **'Mad-bhaktah'** – Engages in My pure devotional service (Nine processes)
 - Either perform all nine or at least one – That will make life perfect
2. **'Sanga varjitah'** – Free from contaminations of fruitive acts and mental speculation
 - Disassociate from persons against Krishna and Bhakti-yoga
 - Atheists
 - Fruitive workers
 - Mental speculators
 - Definition of pure devotional service – Ref *Bhakti-rasamtra-sindhu* 1.1.11 – “*anya bhilasita...*”
 - Free from all material desires
 - Free from fruitive acts and mental speculation (Karma and Jnana)
 - ‘Think of Krishna’ and act for Krishna ‘favourably’ – e.g. Not like Kamsa who was always thinking of Krishna, but unfavourably
 - Accept favourable and reject unfavourable (*Hari-Bhakti Vilasa* – “*anukulasya...*”)
 - A pure devotee does not even want Goloka – only wants to serve Krishna
3. **'Mat-karma Krt'** – **Works for 'Me'** – without attachment to the results (with mentality of Krishna as proprietor) –
 - Krishna-karma – Implies that no work should be done except in relationship with Krishna
 - e.g. Businessman offering money to Krishna or Constructing a big temple for Krishna
 - Accept remnants of Krishna’s offering as Prasadam
 - Even poorest man can perform – e.g. Clean temple / Cultivate garden for flowers and tulasi (*Bg.* 9.26 – “*patram pushpam...*”)
4. **'Mat-paramo'** – Makes 'Me' the Supreme Goal of Life
 - Considers Krishna’s association in Supreme abode as the highest perfection of life
 - No wish to elevate to Higher planets like Brahmaloaka etc.
 - Not even satisfied with Brahmajyoti but only Krishna loka
 - Because he has full knowledge of that planet
5. **'Nirvairah sarva-bhutesu'** – Friendly to all living beings
 - Because he knows Krishna consciousness as the only solution to all problems
 - Has personally experienced all this
 - Therefore wants to introduce Krishna consciousness in human society
 - Takes all risk to spread e.g. Jesus Christ / Prahlada Maharaja / Haridas Thakur
 - Krishna Conscious person knows the cause of suffering – “forgetfulness of eternal relationship with Krishna”
 - Highest benefit is “to relieve the neighbour from material problems”

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 11.55 – Additional points from the purport

(a) **About *Bhagavad-gita***

- **For whom** – For conditioned souls who are engaged in Lording over and do not know real spiritual life
- **Purpose** – To show how to understand spiritual existence and eternal relationship with Supreme Personality of Godhead and how to go Back to Godhead
- **Process** – Given in 11.55 – Work for Krishna (Devotional Service)
- **How to Work** – Transfer all energy entirely to Krishna conscious acts *e.g. Yukta-vairagya*

(b) **The Lord is very merciful to a person engaged according to 11.55** – Such a person reaches the highest planet

(c) **Conclusion / Purport of Chapter 11 –**

- Form of Krishna is Essential and Supreme
 - Krishna exhibits '*Universal Form*' which is temporary
 - '*Form of Time*' which devours all
 - Even '*Vishnu*' form which is four-handed
 - Thus Krishna is the origin of all
- Krishna's Form can only be understood by 'His unalloyed devotees'
 - For a devotee, only two-handed '*Syamasundara*' form is important
 - Who can see the Lord? – Eyes anointed with 'Love of God' (*Brahma Samhita* 5.39)

∞ END OF CHAPTER 11 ∞

CHAPTER 11 Appendix

Selected Texts extracted from "Surrender unto Me"

Text 11.4

The word *yogeśvara*, master of all mystic power, is used by Arjuna to indicate that he believes Kṛṣṇa, by His mystic power, can enable him to see the universal form. The word *prabhu* as used here means "one with the capacity, power and strength" to show the universal form.

Text 11.7

Kṛṣṇa used the word *paśya* ('see') four times in the last three verses. He is emphasizing that Arjuna should see this wonderful universal form, never before seen, though once He showed an aspect of it to Duryodhana.

In an attempt to avoid the Battle of Kurukṣetra, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira sent Kṛṣṇa to Duryodhana as a messenger of peace. Duryodhana's and Karṇa's response, however, was foolish. To express disdain for the Pāṇḍavas' strength, they plotted to bind Kṛṣṇa with ropes and throw Him into prison. Only a great devotee such as Yaśodā-devī, however, can evoke submission from the unlimitedly powerful Lord and bind Him. Binding Kṛṣṇa was impossible for Duryodhana because he was envious and devoid of *bhakti*. Duryodhana's and Karṇa's attempt only caused Kṛṣṇa to laugh and say, "You cannot bind Me. I exist everywhere!" At that time, Kṛṣṇa showed part of His universal form to Duryodhana, who became frightened but remained unsubmitive. Duryodhana continued minimizing Kṛṣṇa, despite His show of power, by saying, "Oh, Kṛṣṇa simply has mystic powers."

The universal form shown to Duryodhana was not the same as the universal form Kṛṣṇa will now show Arjuna.

Text 11.8

Kṛṣṇa uses the word *divyam* to describe the "divine" eyes or vision He will award Arjuna to enable him to behold His universal form. Śrīla Prabhupāda further explains this in his purport to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1.24: "A pure devotee of the Lord, being unaccustomed to looking into such a mundane gigantic form of the Lord, requires special vision for the purpose. The Lord, therefore, favored Arjuna with special vision for looking into His *virāṭ-rūpa*, which is described in the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura poses and then answers the following question: "Why should Arjuna, who directly perceives with his own eyes the sweetness of the supreme person, be unable to perceive a partial expansion of the Lord and need to receive divine eyes? Some explain this by saying that those most excellent eyes which perceive the sweetness of the supreme person's human pastimes are exclusive in their scope of perception; they do not perceive the opulence of the Lord's Godlike pastimes. After all, a tongue tasting crystal sugar cannot simultaneously experience the taste of unrefined gur, or sugarcane."

Text 11.9

Sañjaya, also empowered to see the universal form, next describes Arjuna's vision.

Texts 11.10 – 11.11

The word *divya* is used four times in these two verses to describe the extraordinary ornaments, weapons, garlands and fragrances of the universal form. Śrīla Prabhupāda describes the word *aneka* (“many”) in the purport, showing that Arjuna saw unlimited manifestations distributed throughout the universe.

Text 11.18

The universal form is dazzling and radiant. In text 17, Arjuna describes it as *aprameyam*, immeasurable, and in text 18, he attempts to describe the immeasurable.

Text 11.29

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa describes the significance of these two analogies—waves of the river flowing into the ocean and moths entering fire—which depict distinct entrances by different warriors into the blazing mouths. Rivers flow into the ocean naturally, without intentional effort, and moths consciously enter fire and perish. Some of the warriors, by their demoniac behavior, are consciously destroying themselves.

Text 11.32

What is Kṛṣṇa’s all-destructive form? *Kāla-rūpa*, time. What is the mission of the *kāla-rūpa*? Destruction of all the soldiers except the Pāṇḍavas. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: “The Lord is saying that even if Arjuna did not fight, every one of them would be destroyed, for that was His plan. If Arjuna stopped fighting, they would die in another way. Death could not be checked, even if he did not fight. In fact, they were already dead.” Arjuna cannot save anyone’s life by not fighting, but he has the choice whether or not to participate in the battle. Kṛṣṇa, however, wants Arjuna to perform his duty. Even though the opposition is already dead, He wishes Arjuna to fight as His instrument.

Text 11.33

Savyasācī also means “one who can fight ambidexterously, with either hand, left or right.” Kṛṣṇa therefore encourages Arjuna to now use all his skills to fight, without pride, because *pūrvam eva*, “by previous arrangement,” not because of Arjuna’s skills, the warriors are as good as dead.

Text 11.34

In Bg. 2.6, Arjuna expressed his uncertainty as to who will win the battle. Here Kṛṣṇa says, *jetā asi*, “You will conquer,” to certify that Arjuna will be victorious. Kṛṣṇa also adds Jayadratha’s name to the three warriors already mentioned in text 26. Although he is not as powerful as the others, Jayadratha was given a boon by Lord Śiva to be able to stop the Pāṇḍavas once. Because Arjuna knows this, he is concerned about Jayadratha. Kṛṣṇa assures Arjuna that his concern is unwarranted.

Texts 11.41 – 11.42

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains that Arjuna is lamenting his previous, over-familiar relationship with Kṛṣṇa. For example, he would usually call Kṛṣṇa “Kṛṣṇa,” and not the more honorific “Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” Arjuna’s referring to Kṛṣṇa as “Kṛṣṇa” also indicates that Kṛṣṇa is the son of Vasudeva, who was merely a minister, whereas Arjuna’s father, Paṇḍu, was a great warrior. Similarly, Arjuna, a member of the royal Pāṇḍava dynasty, would refer to Kṛṣṇa as “Yādava,” a member of a family unable to rule. Furthermore, Arjuna would at times say, “O my friend” as if being condescendingly kind: “Although I am superior to You, out of my affection I accept You as my friend.” Now aware of Kṛṣṇa’s actual position, Arjuna feels ashamed and begs forgiveness.

Text 11.53

Text 53 indirectly glorifies bhakti by using negatives. Kṛṣṇa here mentions that the paths He has discussed in Chapters One through Six will not provide us the means by which we can truly see Him in His most confidential, two-armed form. What, then, is the method by which we can see Kṛṣṇa?

Text 11.54

This verse directly glorifies bhakti. The word *ananya* emphasizes that devotional service should be undivided, with no influence of karma and *jñāna*. The word *praveṣṭum*, “to enter into,” is used in the sense of entering a city. When we enter a city, we don’t become the city.

Text 11.55

In Chapter Seven, Kṛṣṇa described Himself as the Supreme Lord and said that we can see everything in this world as an expansion of two of His energies. In Chapter Nine, Kṛṣṇa again explained that everything comes from Him and should be seen in relationship to Him. Kṛṣṇa concluded Chapter Nine by saying that everyone, regardless of birth, should worship Him with devotion. In Chapter Ten, Kṛṣṇa explained His opulences and said, *ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*: “I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me.” At the end of Chapter Ten, Kṛṣṇa stated, *ekāṁśena sthito jagat*: “With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire universe.”

After explaining this confidential knowledge to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa proved His words by displaying His universal form before Arjuna, Sañjaya and the demigods. Kṛṣṇa thus established the future criterion for those who claim to be God. Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the Supreme Lord, also showed His universal form at the home of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura.