

BOOK XI

ARJUNA SAID:

The word which Thou hast spoken through love of me, the supreme mystery named the Oversoul—through it my delusion is gone.

For the birth and the passing of beings have been heard by me at length from Thee, whose eyes are lotus petals; I have heard also of the Great Spirit, which passes not away.

So I would see that Self as it has been spoken by Thee, Mighty Lord; that divine form of Thine, O best of men!

If Thou thinkest it can be seen by me, Lord, Master of union, then reveal to me the Self everlasting!

THE MASTER SAID:

Son of Pritha, behold my forms hundredfold and thousandfold; manifold, divine, of many colors and forms. (5)

Behold the sons of the Mother, the Breaths, the Thunderers, the twin Healers, the Storm-powers! Behold, O son of Bharata, many wonders unseen before!

Behold the whole world gathered together here, things moving and unmoving, within My body; and whatsoever else thou wouldst see, O thou of crested locks!

But Me thou canst not behold with this vision of thine. I give thee divine vision! Behold my lordly power!

SANJAYA SAID:

Thereupon, O king, having spoken thus, Hari, the mighty Lord of power, revealed to the son of Pritha the supreme lordly form.

Many-faced, many-eyed, of many wonderful aspects, with many divine adornments, with many upraised divine weapons, (10)

With divine garlands and vestures, anointed with divine perfumes, altogether marvellous in nature, godlike, endless, facing everywhere.

Such as would be the radiance of a thousand suns bursting forth suddenly in the sky, such was the radiance of that Mighty Spirit.

There the son of Pandu beheld the whole world with all its differences gathered together in the body of that God of gods.

Then invaded with dismay, his flesh creeping, the conqueror of wealth bowing his head before the divinity, and with palms joined, spoke thus:

ARJUNA SAID:

I behold the gods in Thy body, O divine One! and all the hosts of diverse beings; Brahma the Creator, seated on the lotus throne, and all the Seers and Serpents of wisdom. (15)

With many an arm and maw and face and eye, I behold Thee altogether endless-formed; neither end nor middle nor yet beginning of Thee do I see, O all-formed Lord of all!

With diadem, mace and disk, a mountain of light, through Thy whole being luminous I behold Thee, difficult to view, perfectly radiant like blazing fire or the sun, immeasurable.

Thou art to be known as the supreme Everlasting; Thou art the supreme treasure of the universe; Thou art the eternal guardian of the immemorial law, I esteem Thee to be the everlasting Spirit.

Without beginning, middle or end, of endless valor, mighty-armed, Whose eyes are sun and moon; I behold Thee of countenance like flaming fire, illuminating all the universe by Thy light.

For all the expanse between heaven and earth is filled by Thee, and all the regions of space; beholding this wonderful and terrible form of Thine, the three worlds tremble, O Mighty Spirit! (20)

For the host of the powers draw near to Thee, praising Thee, fearful, with joined palms; and the hosts of the Mighty Seers and Masters adore Thee with songs of praise, crying: Hail! Before Thee.

The Thunderers, the sons of the Mother, the Breaths, the Light-powers, the twin Healers, the Storm-powers, those who drink up the offering; seraphs, earth-sprites, the hosts of gods and Masters, all view Thee with awe.

Beholding Thy mighty form, many-faced, many-eyed, O mighty-armed one, with many maws, many terrible teeth, the worlds tremble, and I also.

For seeing Thee, reaching to the clouds, luminous, many-colored, wide-mouthed, with wide luminous eyes, trembling in heart, I find nor firmness nor peace, O Vishnu!

And beholding Thy mouths with terrible teeth, like unto Time's consuming fires, I know not where I am, nor do I find any place of refuge. Be gracious to me, Lord of gods, upholder of the world! (25)

And the sons of Dhritarashtra here, all of them, with the hosts of the princes of the earth, Bhishma, Drona, Karna yonder, son of the charioteer, and our leading warriors, too,

Hurrying enter Thy mouths, fearful, with terrible teeth; some of them are seen fixed between Thy teeth, their heads crushed.

As many rivers with impetuous waters run forward toward the ocean, so these heroes of the world of men enter Thy flaming mouth.

As moths enter a kindled flame swiftly, to their own destruction, so, verily, to their destruction the people swiftly enter thy mouths.

Thou consumest the people with licking tongues, all together in Thy blazing mouths; Thy terrible rays glow, O Vishnu, filling all the world with their radiance. (30)

Declare to me who Thou art, terrible formed! Honor to Thee, best of gods! Be gracious! I would know Thee, Primal One; for Thy power I comprehend not!

THE MASTER SAID:

I am Time, grown ripe for the destroying of the worlds, here ready to consume the people. Even without thee, they shall all cease to be, the warriors who stand there in the opposing armies.

Therefore arise, win glory, conquering thy foes, enjoy thy splendid kingdom! For these are all slain by Me already. Be thou but the instrument, thou whose both hands have equal skill!

Slay thou Drona and Bhishma, and Jayadratha and Karna, and likewise other heroes of battle, slain by Me already! Fear not! Fight, for thou shalt conquer thy rivals in battle!

SANJAYA SAID:

Arjuna of the diadem, hearing this word of Him of the flowing hair, with joined palms, trembling, bowing low, spoke again to Krishna, stammering, bending fearfully before Him. (35)

ARJUNA SAID:

Rightly, O Thou of flowing hair, the world joys and rejoices in Thy praises! Demons fearing flee to the comers of space; and all the hosts of Masters bow down before Thee.

And how should they not bow before Thee, O Mighty Spirit, Who art more potent than the Creator, Who makest the beginning of things!

O unending Lord of gods, upholder of the world, Thou art the Everlasting, the existent and non-existent, and what is beyond.

Thou art First of the gods, the Spirit, the Ancient, Thou art the supreme treasure of the universel Thou art knower and knowable, and the supreme home; by Thee, of endless form, was all this stretched forth!

Thou art the Wind-god, the Constraining Death, the Fire-lord, the Lord of the azure sphere, the Moon, the Lord of beings, the great Progenitor! Obeisance, obeisance to Thee thousandfold! Again, once more, obeisance, obeisance to Thee!

Obeisance from before and from behind! Obeisance to Thee on all sides, for Thou art All! Thou art of endless valor, of measureless might! Thou possessest all, for Thou art All! (40)

If thinking Thee my comrade, addressed Thee brusquely: Ho Krishna! Ho son of Yadu! Ho comrade! not knowing this greatness of Thine, or carelessly, or through affection,

Or whatever I have done to make a jest of Thee, unseemly, in journeying, resting, or seated, or at the banquet, whether alone, O unfallen one! or in presence of these, for all this ask forgiveness from Thee, immeasurable one!

Thou art the Father of the world, of things moving and unmoving; Thou art worthy of honor, the reverend Teacher of the world! None equal Thee; how could any be greater?—even in the three worlds there is none like Thee in might!

Therefore bowing down, prostrating my body before Thee, I seek Thy grace, O worthy Lord! As the father his son, the comrade his comrade, the beloved his beloved, so deign Thou, Lord, to pardon me!

I exult, beholding what was never seen before, and my heart trembles with fear; show me, Lord, the former form; Lord of gods, be gracious, upholder of worlds! (45)

I would see Thee once more with diadem, mace and disk in thy hands as before! Take again Thy four-limbed shape, Thou of a thousand arms, of form universal!

THE MASTER SAID:

Through My favor toward thee, Arjuna, was this supreme form shown thee by My divine power, radiant, universal, endless, primal, seen by none before thee.

Not by Vedas, sacrifices, study, not by gifts or rites or harsh penances is the vision of Me to be gained in the world of men by any but thee, foremost hero of the children of Kuru!

Let not fear nor confusion overcome thee, beholding My form so terrible! Behold my former shape once more, thy fear gone, thy heart at rest!

SANJAYA SAID:

Vasudeva thus addressing Arjuna, showed him once more His own form; the Mighty Spirit consoled him fearful, taking once more a friendly shape. (50)

ARJUNA SAID:

Seeing this gracious human form of Thine, O arouser of men! I am now myself again, of quiet heart, returned to my own nature.

THE MASTER SAID:

This form of Mine which thou hast seen is hard indeed to see! Even the gods ever desire a sight of this form!

Nor can I be seen thus through Vedas, penances, gifts, sacrifices, in the form which thou hast seen.

But I can be known thus through single-hearted love, Arjuna, and seen as I truly am, and entered, O consumer of the foe!

He who works for Me, intent on Me, loving Me, free from attachment, without enmity toward all beings, he comes to Me, O son of Pandu! (55)