

The Cosmic Vision¹

(from Shri Purohit Swami's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* 2001, chapter 11)

5 Behold, O Arjuna! my celestial forms, by hundreds and thousands, various in kind, in color, and in shape.

6 Behold the Powers of Nature: fire, earth, wind, and sky; the sun, the heavens, the moon, the stars; all the forces of vitality and of healing; and the roving winds. See the myriad wonders revealed to none but you.

7 Here, in Me living as one, O Arjuna! behold the whole universe, movable and immovable, and anything else that you would see.

8 Yet since with mortal eyes you cannot see Me, lo! I give you the Divine Sight. See now the glory of My Sovereignty.

Sanjaya continued:

9 Having thus spoken, O King! The Lord Shri Krishna, the Almighty Prince of Wisdom, showed to Arjuna the Supreme Form of the Great God.

10 There were countless eyes and mouths, and mystic forms innumerable with shining ornaments and flaming celestial weapons.

11 Crowned with heavenly garlands, clothed in shining garments, anointed with divine unctions, He showed Himself to the Resplendent One, Marvelous, Boundless, Omnipresent.

12 Could a thousand suns blaze forth together, it would be but a faint reflection of the radiance of the Lord God.²

13 In that vision Arjuna saw the universe, with its manifold shapes, all embraced in One, its Supreme Lord.

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¹ The *Bhagavad Gita* is one of the most cherished and inspiring of Hindu texts, a dialogue reported by Sanjaya between Vishnu's avatar, Krishna and the warrior prince, Arjuna. On the verge of a great battle, Krishna provides the reasons for going to war, but in so doing, lays out the ultimate meanings in life. We have here one of the most often referred to descriptions of the Infinite, the Omnipresent Divine, the Brahman/Atam, in relation to the "hundreds and thousands" of "myriad" finite forms.

² Robert Oppenheimer, one of the American scientists working on the atomic bomb, on July 16, 1945 quoted this passage in response to witnessing the first atomic bomb explosion.