# Understanding Bhagavan and the Absolute Truth

## Text

TEXT 2  
श्री भगवानुवाच  
कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।  
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ २ ॥  
śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
kutas tvā kaśmalam idaṁ  
viṣame samupasthitam  
anārya-juṣṭam asvargyam  
akīrti-karam arjuna  
Synonyms  
śrī-bhagavān uvāca — the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; kutaḥ — wherefrom; tvā — unto you; kaśmalam — dirtiness; idam — this lamentation; viṣame — in this hour of crisis; samupasthitam — arrived; anārya — persons who do not know the value of life; juṣṭam — practiced by; asvargyam — which does not lead to higher planets; akīrti — infamy; karam — the cause of; arjuna — O Arjuna.  
  
Translation  
The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the value of life. They lead not to higher planets but to infamy.  
  
Purport  
Kṛṣṇa and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are identical. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa is referred to as Bhagavān throughout the Gītā. Bhagavān is the ultimate in the Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth is realized in three phases of understanding, namely Brahman, or the impersonal all-pervasive spirit; Paramātmā, or the localized aspect of the Supreme within the heart of all living entities; and Bhagavān, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.11) this conception of the Absolute Truth is explained thus:  
  
vadanti tat tattva-vidas  
tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam  
brahmeti paramātmeti  
bhagavān iti śabdyate  
“The Absolute Truth is realized in three phases of understanding by the knower of the Absolute Truth, and all of them are identical. Such phases of the Absolute Truth are expressed as Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.”  
  
These three divine aspects can be explained by the example of the sun, which also has three different aspects, namely the sunshine, the sun’s surface and the sun planet itself. One who studies the sunshine only is the preliminary student. One who understands the sun’s surface is further advanced. And one who can enter into the sun planet is the highest. Ordinary students who are satisfied by simply understanding the sunshine – its universal pervasiveness and the glaring effulgence of its impersonal nature – may be compared to those who can realize only the Brahman feature of the Absolute Truth. The student who has advanced still further can know the sun disc, which is compared to knowledge of the Paramātmā feature of the Absolute Truth. And the student who can enter into the heart of the sun planet is compared to those who realize the personal features of the Supreme Absolute Truth. Therefore, the bhaktas, or the transcendentalists who have realized the Bhagavān feature of the Absolute Truth, are the topmost transcendentalists, although all students who are engaged in the study of the Absolute Truth are engaged in the same subject matter. The sunshine, the sun disc and the inner affairs of the sun planet cannot be separated from one another, and yet the students of the three different phases are not in the same category.  
  
The Sanskrit word bhagavān is explained by the great authority Parāśara Muni, the father of Vyāsadeva. The Supreme Personality who possesses all riches, all strength, all fame, all beauty, all knowledge and all renunciation is called Bhagavān. There are many persons who are very rich, very powerful, very beautiful, very famous, very learned and very much detached, but no one can claim that he possesses all riches, all strength, etc., entirely. Only Kṛṣṇa can claim this because He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No living entity, including Brahmā, Lord Śiva or Nārāyaṇa, can possess opulences as fully as Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it is concluded in the Brahma-saṁhitā by Lord Brahmā himself that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No one is equal to or above Him. He is the primeval Lord, or Bhagavān, known as Govinda, and He is the supreme cause of all causes:  
  
īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ  
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ  
anādir ādir govindaḥ  
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam  
“There are many personalities possessing the qualities of Bhagavān, but Kṛṣṇa is the supreme because none can excel Him. He is the Supreme Person, and His body is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. He is the primeval Lord Govinda and the cause of all causes.” (Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1)  
  
In the Bhāgavatam also there is a list of many incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but Kṛṣṇa is described as the original Personality of Godhead, from whom many, many incarnations and Personalities of Godhead expand:  
  
ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ  
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam  
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokaṁ  
mṛḍayanti yuge yuge  
“All the lists of the incarnations of Godhead submitted herewith are either plenary expansions or parts of the plenary expansions of the Supreme Godhead, but Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself.” (Bhāg. 1.3.28)  
  
Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth, the source of both the Supersoul and the impersonal Brahman.  
  
In the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Arjuna’s lamentation for his kinsmen is certainly unbecoming, and therefore Kṛṣṇa expressed His surprise with the word kutaḥ, “wherefrom.” Such impurities were never expected from a person belonging to the civilized class of men known as Āryans. The word āryan is applicable to persons who know the value of life and have a civilization based on spiritual realization. Persons who are led by the material conception of life do not know that the aim of life is realization of the Absolute Truth, Viṣṇu, or Bhagavān, and they are captivated by the external features of the material world, and therefore they do not know what liberation is. Persons who have no knowledge of liberation from material bondage are called non-Āryans. Although Arjuna was a kṣatriya, he was deviating from his prescribed duties by declining to fight. This act of cowardice is described as befitting the non-Āryans. Such deviation from duty does not help one in the progress of spiritual life, nor does it even give one the opportunity to become famous in this world. Lord Kṛṣṇa did not approve of the so-called compassion of Arjuna for his kinsmen.

## Summary

The text discusses the concept of Bhagavan as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the three phases of understanding the Absolute Truth, and the importance of knowing the value of life. It emphasizes the significance of realizing Bhagavan as the ultimate Absolute Truth and highlights the distinctions between Aryans and non-Aryans based on spiritual understanding and material captivation.

### TRUE-FALSE

### Question

Is Lord Bhagavan the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

### Answer

TRUE

### TRUE-FALSE

### Question

Is Arjuna an impure person?

### Answer

FALSE

### TRUE-FALSE

### Question

Is knowing the value of life important to lead to a higher planet?

### Answer

TRUE

### TRUE-FALSE

### Question

Is Bhagavan the ultimate Absolute Truth?

### Answer

TRUE

### TRUE-FALSE

### Question

Is Brahman one of the phases of understanding the Absolute Truth?

### Answer

TRUE

### MCQ

### Question

Who is referred to as the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the text?

### Answer

Krishna

### MCQ

### Question

What are the three phases of understanding the Absolute Truth mentioned in the text?

### Answer

Brahman, Paramatma, Bhagavan

### MCQ

### Question

Which aspect of the sun is compared to realizing the personal feature of the Supreme Absolute Truth?

### Answer

Inner affair of the sun planet

### LONG ANSWER

### Question

Explain the concept of Bhagavan as the Supreme Personality of Godhead according to the text.

### Answer

Bhagavan is described as the ultimate Absolute Truth who posses richness, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge, and renunciation. Krishna is identified as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and all living entities, including Brahma, Lord Shiva, and Narayana, derive their opulence from Krishna. The text highlights that Bhagavan is the source of all incarnations and is the cause of all causes.

### LONG ANSWER

### Question

Describe the three phases of understanding the Absolute Truth as explained in the text.

### Answer

The text explains the three phases of understanding the Absolute Truth as Brahman, the impersonal all-pervasive spirit; Paramatma, the localized aspect of the Supreme within the heart of the living entity; and Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It emphasizes that Bhaktas, or transcendentalists, realize Bhagavan as the topmost transcendental feature of the Absolute Truth.

### LONG ANSWER

### Question

Why is knowing the value of life important according to the text?

### Answer

Knowing the value of life is considered important because it leads to a higher planet and helps in avoiding infamy. The text suggests that persons who understand the spiritual realization and aim of life are known as Aryans, while those captivated by external material features and lacking in spiritual knowledge are termed non-Aryans. It also highlights that failure to adhere to prescribed duties can hinder spiritual progress and lead to acts of cowardice.

## Higher Order Thinking Skills

Conceptual Understanding

Spiritual Realization