

Indirect and direct knowledge

There are two kinds of teaching: indirect and direct. Teaching deduction and induction, reasoning and inference through the *Vedas* and concluding treatises (*Vedanta*) is indirect. When this understanding is experienced and realized, it becomes direct. The highest *Brahman* —which is truth, wisdom, and bliss— is self-evident, so its understanding can at best be only indirect. Looked at from one point of view, the *Brahman* knows neither indirect nor direct. It is unique, being beyond both. To obtain this direct knowledge of the Absolute, the first requisite is spiritual practice, and the first step in this practice is service done to a virtuous teacher with full faith and full submission.

The teacher too should be always instructing the aspirant in the nature of *Brahman*, and in simple ways. When the disciple grasps this instruction, it becomes indirect knowledge. This indirect knowledge itself can be transformed into direct knowledge by constant reflection, turning over in the mind. Indirect knowledge is as shifting as letters drawn on water, while direct knowledge is indelible, like letters carved on rock.

When the sound “horse” is heard, the form of the horse presents itself before the mind; so too, at the word “*Brahman*”, the nature of *Brahman* will come into the consciousness. This is called meditation (*dhyana*) by those versed in the four disciplines or the first principles of spiritual discipline. To be stabilized in meditation, the aspirant should cultivate control of the senses (*sama*) and passions (*dama*) and cultivate also the attitude of acting without any desire for the fruits of action. Whoever is an adept in the six qualifications —control of the senses, passions, etc.— can easily see with the mind’s eye the form of *Brahman* as soon as the exposition of Its nature is heard. Renunciation of the desire for the enjoyment of the fruits of one’s action is also essential. When this detachment is deeply rooted, the consciousness (*chittha*) becomes pure and withdrawal of the senses from the objective world is made possible.