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[What is New](#)[Link Resources](#)**Difficulties in Understanding Brahman**

Any attempt to explain Brahman to the satisfaction of a mind that is driven by reason and familiar with the concretization thought is fraught with enormous difficulties, because that which is inexplicable cannot be explained by any amount of reasoning and logic. Brahman is beyond the senses, beyond the mind, beyond our intelligence and dreams. Then how can It be explained to the satisfaction of an intellectual and curious mind? The Rigvedic seers themselves had this problem in their mind when they called Him vaguely as "IT" or "This" or "That"

The difficulty in understanding and knowing Brahman is well explained in the Kena Upanishad. Even gods are not free from their ignorance of Brahman (II.2.1). All that we can understand about Brahman is that we cannot understand It. Even after prolonged spiritual practice and meditation, one cannot even conclude whether one knows it or not. If a person thinks that he knows It, he does not know that he does not know. To whomsoever It is not known, It is known to him. But to whomsoever it is known, is not known to him. It is not understood by those who understand it and understood by those who do not understand it. It can be known only when one experiences directly at all levels of consciousness. (II. 2. 2-4).

Trying to worship Brahman incorrectly and ignorantly without knowing the right approach can also result in great difficulties for a person who is on the path to salvation. The Isa Upanishad warns the students of Brahman not to take sides while approaching Brahman. Those who worship the unmanifest (asambhutim) enter blinding darkness and those who worship the manifest only (sambhutim) enter into greater darkness. The right approach is to worship both and realize one through the other.

Even an enlightened seer like Yagnavalkya had difficulties in explaining the nature of Brahman and his creation. While speaking to Sakalya in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, he declares, " That Self is not this, not this. It is incomprehensible for it is not comprehended." When Gargi Vacaknavi asks him too many questions, in the same Upanishad he expresses his irritation saying, " Gargi, do not question too much. Otherwise your head may fall off. You are asking so many questions about a divinity about whom we are not expected to ask many questions."

Else where in the same Upanishad he resorts to negative terminology to explain the inexplicable using such words as aksaram (imperishable), asthulam (not gross), ananu (not subtle), ahrasvam (not short), adirgham (not long), achchayam (not shadow), atamah (not tamasic) and so on (Brihadaranyaka III.8.8).

What is the original state of Brahman? Even the seers do not seem to have an answer. Uddalaka Aruni tells Svetaketu in Chandogya Upanishad, that in the beginning the Being was alone, one only, one without a second and in the next moment changes his statement stating that according to some in the beginning the

non-Being was alone, without a second and that from that non-Being being was produced. (VI.2.1)



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