

Summary of BRAHMA SUTRA

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SUMMARY OF BRAHMA SUTRA

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INTRODUCTION:

Upanishad is the pramana for Sastra vichara. Sankara bhasya is the sampradaya. The study of Sruti prasthanana (Upanishad) is complemented by the study of Smruti prasthanana (Bhagavad Gita) and Nyaya prasthanana (Brahma Sutra).

Brahma Sutra is a sutra text of Vedanta written by Veda Vyasa. It consists of four adhyayas (chapters). Each adhyaya has 4 padas (sections). There are 16 padas. Each pada is sub-divided into adhikaranas (topics). There are 191 adhikaranas. There are 555 sutras (aphorisms).

The sutra text should satisfy six conditions. It should be short, without ambiguity, meaningful, have scope to convey additional meaning, without meaningless words and that which could not be dismissed.

Brahma Sutra presents the essence of Upanishads in cryptic statements. Sankara bhasya analyse the Upanishad statements and establishes the correct understanding of the Upanishad statements after negating the opposing Purvapakshi's views. Sankara bhasya is simple and profound. It is prasanna and gambhira.

ANUBANDA CHATUSTAYAM:

The adhikari is sadhanachatustaya sampannah. Visaya is Brahman. Prayojana is Moksha. Sambandha is revealler (Sastra) and revealed (jiva brahma aikyam).

CHATU SUTRI:

In the first four sutras famously known as Chatu sutri, the entire subject matter is discussed. All the later sutras only elaborate what is discussed in

the first four sutras. Hence the study of first four sutras would give the complete view of Brahma Sutra and also the entire vision of Vedas.

TOPICS:

The four adhyayas discussed are Samanvaya, Avirodha, Sadhana and Phala Adhyayas. Samanvaya adhyaya establishes that Brahman is consistently the central theme of Upanishads. Avirodha adhyaya establishes that there is non contradiction of Brahma vidya with Sruti, Smruti and Yukthi. Sadhana adhyaya explains the preparatory disciplines needed for gaining Brahma vidya. Phala adhyaya gives moksha as the benefit of Brahma vidya.

Each adhikarna has five components. They are Visaya or subject matter, Samsaya or doubt, Purvapaksa or view of non-vedantin, Siddhanta or Vedantic conclusion to be established after refuting all conflicting views and Sangati or connection between previous topic and current topic.

The six important topics analysed are Jiva, Jagat, Iswara, Bandha, Moksha and Sadhana to Moksha.

PURVA PAKSHI'S VIEWS:

There are 6 nastika darsanas which do not accept Vedas as pramana. They are Carvaka, Jaina, Southantika Buddhism, Vaibashika Buddhism, Yogachara Buddhism and Madyamika Buddhism. There are 6 astika darsanas which accept Vedas as pramana. They are Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa. The first four astika darsanas use Vedas for support and depend more on logic. The last two accept Vedas as exclusive pramana. The defects of the 6 nastika darsanas and the first four astika darsanas are pointed out. The limitation of Purva Mimamsa is explained.

ADHYASA BHASYA:

Sankara's introduction starts with adhyasa bhasya. Without adhyasa there is no Vedanta. There is confusion between atma and anatma. Atma is

mistaken for the jiva. Jiva is mistaken for the atma. This is super imposition or adhyasa of the attributes of one thing on another thing. Adhyasa or error is due to ignorance. The error causes samsara. Snake perception on rope is due to adhyasa. Mixing up of satyam and mitya causes adhyasa. Adhyasa will go away when ajnanam , the cause of adhyasa goes away.

Atma lends consciousness to body, mind and sense complex. But atma and body belong to different orders of reality. There is only adyasika sambanda between atma and body. Aham asmi Aham bami is satyam. Identification with sthula sarira, sukshma sarira or karana sarira is adhyasa. Even after knowing atma, badita avidya will continue, like one seeing the blueness of sky.

Based on Vyasika Nyayamala, a succinct presentation is made.

Sankara bhasya is prasanna gambira and unparalleled and unique in detailed analysis of the Sastra In order to appreciate the Sutra in correct perspective, Sankara bhasya analyses the Sutra by giving sangati, visaya, samsaya, purvapaksha and siddhanta.

JIJNASADHIKARANAM: FIRST SUTRA: ATHATO BRAHMAJINASA

MEANING: Thereafter (after gaining the requisite qualifications), therefore (understanding the futility of other pursuits) one desires to know Brahman.

UPANISAD MANTRA: Vyasa had in his mind the underlying mantra for this Sutra as indicated by the word vijijnasasva. Taittiriya Upanisad mantra 3.1.1 "*yato va imani bhutani jayante, yena jatani jivanti, yatprayantyahhisamvisanti, tad vijijnasasva*"

SANGATI: No adhikarana sangati being the first sutra

VISAYA: Vedanta sastra

SAMSAYA: Whether Brahman is subject matter of enquiry or not?

PURVAPAKSA: Adyasa not established. Hence problem cannot be solved by mere knowledge. There is no benefit of this knowledge

SIDDHANTA: Adyasa is there in terms of aham buddhi. This adyasa is due to ajnana. Whereas Sastra says Brahman/ Atma is asanga. Moksha is the benefit of knowing the Brahma-atma. Hence Sastra has to be enquired into.

JANMADYADHIKARANAM: SECOND SUTRA: JANMADYASYA YATAH

MEANING: Brahman is the cause from which the jagat has come, by which the jagat is sustained and to which the jagat goes back.

UPANISAD MANTRA: Vyasa had in his mind the underlying mantra for this Sutra as indicated by the word yatah. Taittiriya Upanisad mantra 3.1.1 "*yato va imani bhutani jayante*". This sutra gives the tatastha lakshana of Brahman. This is only an incidental feature of Brahman from the stand point of the jagat. Later in the Taittiriya Upanisad mantra 3.6.1, going through vicara the student concludes "*anado brameti vyajanath*", which gives the swarupa lakshana.

SANGATI: Brahman is to be known. It is akshepa sangati in terms of Brahma lakshana.

VISAYA: Brahma lakshana

SAMSAYA: Brahma lakshana is possible or not?

PURVAPAKSA: There is no lakshana for Brahman.

SIDDHANTA: There is lakshana for Brahman. Brahman is the cause from which the jagat has come, by which the jagat is sustained and to which the jagat goes back.

Acetana pradhanam, prakriti, anoo, sunya or svabhava cannot be the cause of the jagat.

Yatah means from which cause all these take place. The focus is on upadana karana. The mention of anandam Brahman in the Upanisad implies abinna nimitta upadana karana.

SASTRAYOINTVADHIKARANAM: THIRD SUTRA: SASTRA YONITVAT:

In the sampradaya, this sutra is read twice. This is because the sutra can be interpreted in two ways.

FIRST INTERPRETATION:

MEANING: Brahman is cause of the Veda.

UPANISAD MANTRA: Vyasa had in his mind the underlying mantra for this Sutra. Brahadaranyka Upanisad mantra II.iv.10 "*asya mahato bhutasya nihsvasasitam eta dyad rg vedah*"

SANGATI: Sarvajnatva Brahma lakshana not clear.

VISAYA: Veda karana

SAMSAYA: What is karana of Veda?

PURVAPAKSA: Brahman is not the cause of the Veda. Veda is nitya.

SIDDHANTA: Brahman is cause of the Veda. Brahman revealed the Veda effortlessly like breathing. Brahman manifests the Veda along with the jagat at every cycle of creation. Veda reveals many visaya. Writer of a book knows more than what he has written. Hence Veda karta Brahman is sarvajna.

SECOND INTERPRETATION:

MEANING: Sastra alone is the pramana for knowing Brahman.

UPANISAD MANTRA: Vyasa had in his mind the underlying mantra for this Sutra. Brahadaranyka Upanisad mantra III.ix.26 "*tam tva aupanisadam purusam pracham*".

SANGATI: In the previous sutra Brahma lakshana is presented. In this sutra the basis for arriving at pramana for Brahman is presented.

VISAYA: Pramana for Brahman

SAMSAYA: Is Sastra the only pramana for Brahman?

PURVAPAKSA: Brahman being a siddha vastu can be known through other pramana

SIDDHANTA: Sastra alone is the pramana for Brahman. We cannot prove by reasoning eka karta. Unlike a pot, Brahman is not an object. Hence Sastra is the only pramana.

**SAMANVAYADHIKARANAM: FOURTH SUTRA: TATTU
SAMANVAYAT**

MEANING: Brahman is consistently the central theme of Vedanta sastra

UPANISAD MANTRA: Vyasa had in his mind the underlying mantras for this. Chandogya mantra II.ii.1 "*sadeva somyedamagra asit ekam evadvitiam*". Aitreya mantra II.iv.11 "*atma va idam eka evagra asit*". Brahadaranyaka mantra II.v.19 "*tat etat brahma purvam anaparam anantaram abahyam, ayam atma brahma sarvanubhuh*". Mudaka mantra II.ii.12 "*brahmai vedam amrtam purastat*".

SANGATI: It is akshepa sangati in terms of kriya paratvam of Veda vakya

VISAYA: Vedanta sastra

SAMSAYA: Whether Vedanta vakya reveal Brahma-atma aikyatvam independently or connected to Karma or Upasana?

PURVAPAKSA: Karmaparam is tatparya of veda. Siddhabodaka Vedanta vakya have to be connected to karma bodaka vakya or taken for upasana.

SIDDHANTA: Vedanta sastra is brahma param having brahma atma aikyam as its central theme. It is not connected to karma or upasana.

Brahma param is established by the following six lingas in the Vedanta sastra: Introduction and conclusion, repetition, non availability in any other pramana, benefit, praise of the knowledge and being logical.

The anubandha catustayam for Purva mimamsa and Uttara mimamsa are different. Vedanta vakya are Brahma param.

One Purvapaksa raised for the Fourth Sutra: **TATTUSAMANVAYAT** is discussed below. This explains the process by which a **SRUTA BRAHMA** (One who has heard or read about Brahman) becomes **AVAGATA BRAHMA** (One who is abiding in the understanding of Brahman).

PURVAPAKSA: Karma param is tatparya of Veda. Siddhabodaka Vedanta vakya have to be connected to karma bodhaka vakya or taken for upasana. A person knowing "I am Brahman" is not having any practical utility. We see people who have heard "Tat Tvam Asi" and remain as samsari. He is a sruta brahma samsari.

SIDDHANTA: Vedanta sastra is Brahma param having Brahma-Atma aikyam as its central theme. It is not connected to karma or upasana. A Mumukshu commences his studies as a samsari. He first hears "Tat Tvam Asi". At that time he is a srutha brahma samsari. He has apatata (indirect) jnana and paroksha (not self evident) jnana. He continues his pursuit, until he assimilates this jnanam. Then he is avagata brahma. He gets aparoksa (self-evident) jnana. After that he is not a samsari.

PRAMANA : Vedanta is the only pramana for atma jnana. The pramana will work and a student will eventually understand " I am Brahman". Accepting Vedanta as a pramana happens only when there is sraddha towards Sastra and the Guru.

ADIKARITVAM: It is due to lack of adikaritam that even if someone hears "I am Brahman", remains as a samsari. All the sadanas by a mumukshu are for improving adikaritam, so that the knowledge can work. The pramana will work, once the intellectual obstacles, habitual obstacles and unseen obstacles are removed.

ABHIMANA: There is abhimana with respect to one's body and possessions. "This is me" and "This is mine" is abhimana. An atma jnani is not having abhimana of " This is me" and "This is mine". If he lose his wealth, he does not have dukham. If he wears a nice Kuldla (ear ornament) , he does not have sukham.

JNANI: A snake leaves its dead skin on an anthill. Now the snake does not think that the dead skin is me. Like that a jnani, who has a sarira at vyavakarika level, knows that he is an asariri at the paramartika level. He is a jivan muktha. He is completely free while living.

CONCLUSION: SRUTA BRAHMA should improve his adikarivam and have the attitude of karma yoga. He should live a vedic way of life by doing japa (mental repetition of the Lord's name) and tapa (austerities). Regular performance of pancha maha yajna leads to spiritual growth. They are deva yajna (daily prayers for the welfare of all living beings), pitru yajna (respecting and serving parents and elders), Brahman yajna (learning the Vedas and handing over to the next generation), manusya yajna (serving fellow human beings) and bhootha yajna (taking care of the environment). He should continue to do sravana, manana and nididhyasana until he becomes **AVAGATA BRAHMA**.

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