

Concept Note on the Workshop
Prof. Nataraju Adarasupally
adinatraj@hotmail.com
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Theme of the Workshop—

“Brahmasūtra—With special Reference to Adhyāya II, Pāda II

(Introductory Paper, Objectives, Sub-topics, resource persons etc.)

Brahmasūtra: Chapter II, Part 2 :*Second Chapter* has special significance in the scheme of things of the Brahmasūtra, it is here that we come across logico-philosophical critique of different schools of Indian philosophy by Śankara in particular and other *Ācāryas* in general. The subtle logic employed by Śankara in criticizing the opponents of Advaita school is worth following by the younger faculty and research scholars, we would also take up criticism of Rāmānuja, Bhāskara and Srikantha. Therefore, it is planned that we take up this chapter for the workshop.

An independent re-reading of the Sūtras from ‘Second Chapter, Part II’ with an aim to ascertain the subtlest sense, and also to understand the position held by Bādarāyaṇa—the author of the text is the *prayojana* of this workshop. *Brahma Sūtra(s)* which is a philosophical exposition of Brahman, puts the views of the *Upaniśads* in to a systemic whole. It removes apparent contradictions and binds all the glances of Truth of the *Upaniśads*, and defends Vedānta against all opponents’ criticisms. Select Sutras along with the commentaries of some *ācāryas* will be read and interpreted during this workshop. Research scholars and faculty of both Philosophy and Sanskrit departments, and others interested can participate in this workshop.

The topics covered under the Second Adhyāya, Second Pāda.

01. Consideration of the Samkhya Theory—Sūtras 1-10
02. Consideration of the *Vaiśeṣika* Theory—Sūtras 11-17
03. Consideration of the *Sarvāstivāda*—Sūtras 18-27
04. Consideration of *Vijñānavāda*—Sūtras 28-32
05. Consideration of Jainism—Sutras 33-36
06. Consideration of the view that God is only the efficient cause—*Sūtras* 37-41
07. Consideration of the *Bhāgavata* view—Sūtras 42-45

The main objective of this chapter is refutation of the important philosophical views in regard to the cause of the world. Those views of different schools are criticized which are opposed to the Vedānta views. By independent arguments and by showing Vedic texts this work is accomplished. The basic premise is that a non-intelligent cause such as ‘*Pradhāna*’ or atoms cannot be the cause of the world.

The Background:

Vedāntic thinking during early Upaniśadic times was Phenomenological in nature. Mandūkya Upaniśad presents a detailed analysis of *AvasthāTrayaViçāra*—*Jāgrat*, *Svapna* and *Suśupti* leading to *Turiya*. A critical rigorous analysis of consciousness and its nature is carried out by the Upaniśadic thinkers in waking, dreaming and deep sleep states, no blind assertions on metaphysics was seen in early Vedic times. It was a methodical enterprise, *Taittirīya* presents “Pança-kośa-viçara” analyzing five layers of human existence. Śankara talks about “Parisamkhyāna paddhati” in his

“UpadeśaSāhasri”- a special kind of awareness that is distinct from logical thinking, and analysis. This is also different from popular Dhyāna or meditation.

Brahma Sutra Bhāṣya of Śankara starts with a simple distinction between consciousness and the objects of the world, which are opposed to each other like light and darkness-Asmadpratyaya and Yuśmadpratyaya. The entanglement of these two pratyayas is a hard problem for the Advaitins. The ‘witness Self’-sākśīcāitanya putting the mask of ‘I’ and appropriating the internal organ becomes fit enough to be related to external objects. With the progressive fall of the Self, the entanglement of the Self with the body, mind and senses makes it one of the hard problems to comprehend. ‘The entanglement of the journeying Self’ is a theme that runs through many of the writings from the Vedānta School. There is that progressive entanglement with the objects that the Self comes across. It is the ‘regressive analysis’ and ‘phenomenological reflection’ that removes the layers that cover the pure Self, including the mask of ‘I’ which is external to consciousness. ‘If the transcendental subjectivity is the real Self (mukhyātma), the ‘I’, the empirical self, which functions through the mind-sense-body complex, is the false self (mithyātma)’ⁱ.

The most original philosophical thinking is done in India in the Bhāṣyas or commentaries on original texts. Ideas, concepts and theories are developed in India through traditional schools by writing commentaries and sub-commentaries on Sūtra literature. Economy of words and brevity of expression characterize Sūtras. There are commentaries and sub-commentaries on texts such as Bhaṣyas, Vrttis, Vārtikas, Tīkas, Kārikas etc. A commentary does not just elucidate a point made in the original text, but improvises the idea and thereby extends the domain of knowledge. Every commentary or sub-commentary throws new light on the layered meanings of the text. The inner meanings of the text are revealed in every attempt. Though the progress seems very slow, this is how India could preserve the philosophical tradition alive. Though Śankara,

Rāmānuja, Madhva etc. have written commentaries, yet they brought forth new schools of philosophy. They were original thinkers and contributed immensely to Indian philosophy and religion.

In philosophical world progress in terms of new theories does not happen overnight. Belonging to a school does not prevent one from indulging in creative thinking, nor does it stop one from being very critical of the tradition. It is a myth to think that by belonging to a tradition one's creative impulse gets restricted. We have in India so many Vedānta schools which came in to existence by interpreting the same old Bādarāyaṇa's text 'Brahma Sūtra'. The followers of Śankara's Advaita were split in to two schools, i.e. Bhāmati and Vivaraṇa by differently interpreting SūtraBhāṣya of Śankara. Therefore, it is naïve to speak of absence of liberty in following a tradition. Thinking is done within a tradition. Can we ever think outside a tradition? Following a tradition is not equivalent to accepting it as an authority, rather it is a continuation of the efforts put in by the earlier generations in problematizing and understanding the hard and easy problems of different fields of philosophy, religion and culture.

Second Chapter, Part II of the Brahmasūtra: The special place that this pādaenjoys in the text is known to the world of Vedānta. It is here that different schools and their theories are critiqued by the Bādarāyaṇa's Sūtras and are brilliantly supported by the Bhāṣya of ĀcāryaŚankara. This workshop is meant to look independently at the Brahmasūtra text, though we will read commentaries of Śankara, Rāmānuja, Bhāskara, Srikantha etc. we will read select Sūtras from the 'Tarkapāda' chapter of the Brahmasūtra. As we are well aware, there are compromises made by the commentators on Vedānta Sūtra while commenting in several places. Ācāryas had to establish their own school. What exactly is the position of Bādarāyaṇa is not known. Brahmasūtra is very difficult to grasp in the absence of a Bhāṣya. Such is the terse nature of Sūtra literature of classical times. Resource persons will take up Sūtras from the Tarkapāda and deal with different

commentaries to see the implications thereof. It is this meaning dimension which had created several schools of Vedānta. We will make an independent reading of the sūtras.

Bādarāyaṇa in Sūtras from I.4.20-I.4.22 summarizes views of Āsmarātya, Audhulomi and Kāśakrtsṇa representing Bhedābheda, *Bheda and Abheda* schools of Vedānta philosophy. The soul is neither absolutely different, nor absolutely non-different from Brahman is the view held by the Bhedābheda school. Soul is absolutely different from Brahman is the strong conviction of Bhedā school of thought. Soul is absolutely identical with Brahman, and somehow this identity is forgotten is the view held by *Abhedavādins*. The later interpreters of Vedānta texts accept one of the above-mentioned schools of thought. Ātreya, Bharadvāja, Bodhāyana, and Yagñavalkya are other Upaniśadic thinkers who have thrown light on our understanding of the nature of Brahman and its relation with Ātman. We will read and interpret these Sūtras in the workshop.

Two important aspects, though metaphysical in nature, are discussed by the commentators on the Brahmasūtra. One is the nature of the released soul, and the other is the relation between individual soul and Brahman. All the acāryas seem to have metaphysical pre-suppositions and pre-conceived notions before starting to write commentary on the text, accordingly they interpret the Sūtras. Secondary and tertiary meanings are ascribed to the words; though there are primary and obvious meanings are available. Depending the school they belong, interpretation follows the same line of finding the meaning to words and Sūtras. They were all system builders and they all adhered to the principle that entire corpus of Vedic literature has “*Eka Vākyata*”- unity of meaning, and that *Upaniśads* don’t support different school of thought.

We will read sutras from first chapter, particularly first four sutras. Starting from “*Athāto Brahma Jigñāsa, JanmādyasyaYatah, Shāstrayonitvāt, and TattuSamanvayāt*”, because the very first word ‘Atha’ gets interpreted differently by all the Ācāryas. The meaning of ‘atha’ lays foundations for a school of thought. We will also read II.2.28 to

II.2.32 (from Tarkapāda) these sutras consider the nature of Vijñānavāda, these sutras deny the subjective idealism, and affirm extra mental reality of the world of waking experience. Even Śankara contends that the things that we apprehend in waking state are not negated in any state. As for the ŚūnyaVāda, Śankara contends that complete denial of everything is not possible except on the recognition of some truth which cannot be denied. Bhāskara says that those who follow the Bauddha system are *māyā-vādins* who are rejected by Bādarāyaña in these sutras. Another important sutra that posed difficulties to Advaitins is “*Jagat-vyāpāra-varjam-Prakarñāt*”, the nature of the released soul and its curtailed powers when it comes to creation of the world etc. Only Brahman possesses the powers to create or destroy the world not the Jīva even after release, is the view of Bādarāyaña. Rāmānuja and Bhāskara found this sutra very easy to explain, since this suits their school of thought.

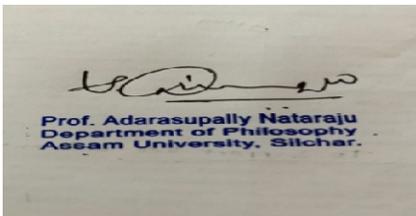
Research scholars and younger faculty of both Philosophy and Sanskrit departments can participate, or anyone interested and they are expected to come to the workshop with some basic readings and understanding of the Vedānta philosophy. Please visit the ICPR website for further details.

Reference Books:

01. *Brahmasūtra: The Philosophy of Spiritual Life*, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Harper and Brothers, Newyork.
02. *Brahmasūtra* with Śankara’s Commentary, Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, New Delhi (In Sanskrit).
03. *Brahmasūtrawirh* Śankara’s Commentary, Advaita Ashrama, Ramakrishna Mission Publication.
04. *Brahmasūtra* with Rāmānuja Commentary, Ramakrishna Mission Publication.
05. *Brahma-Sūtras* Sanskrit text and English Translation, George Thibaut, Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, New Delhi.

Invitees to the WORKSHOP—**Resource Persons.**

01. Prof. Sachchindanand Mishra, MS, ICPR.
02. Prof. D.K. Mohanta, University of Kolkata.
03. Prof. Shakuntala Bora, Gauhati University.
04. Prof. Ram KishorTripathi, Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi.
05. Prof. Dhananjay Kumar Pandey, Dept. of Vaidic Darshan, BHU, Varanasi.
06. Prof. Milan Khangamcha, Manipur University.
07. Prof. K. Ramasubrahmanian, IIT, Bombay
08. Prof. A. Ramulu, Dept. of Sanskrit, Osmania University.(Online)
09. Prof. Nataraju Adarasupally. Dean, School of Philosophy, Assam University.
10. Dr. Mani DravidaShastry, Chennai.
11. Dr. K. Satish Bhatt, National Sanskrit University, Tirupathi.
12. Two other resource persons available during the workshop.



Prof. Adarasupally Nataraju

Dean, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan School of Philosophical Studies,

Director, Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems, Assam University, Silchar.

Ph-+91-9435522165, 6001595543

Mail-adinatraj@gmail.com
