

## Brahma Sutra Class at AVG



The classes held during the months of June 2013 and July 2013 are briefly summarized.

### INTRODUCTION:

Upaniṣad is the pramāṇa for śāstra vicāra. Śāṅkara bhāṣya is the sampradāya. The study of śruti prasthāna (upaniṣad) is complemented by the study of Smṛti prasthāna (Bhagavad Gītā) and Nyāya prasthāna (Brahma Sūtra).

Brahma sūtra is a sūtra text of Vedānta written by Veda Vyasa. It consists of four adhyāyas (chapters). Each adhyāya has four pādās (sections). There are 16 pādās. Each pādā is sub-divided into adhikaraṇās (topics). There are 191 adhikaraṇās. There are 555 Sūtras (aphorisms).

The sūtra 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 sūtra presents the essence of Upaniṣads in cryptic statements. Śāṅkara bhāṣya analyse the Upaniṣad statements and establishes the correct understanding of the Upaniṣad statements after negating the opposing pūrvapakṣi's views. Śāṅkara bhāṣya is simple and profound. It is prasanna and gambhīra.

### ANUBANDHA CATUṢṬAYAM:

The adhikāri is sādhana catuṣṭaya sampannaḥ. Viśaya is Brahman. Prayojana is Mokṣa. Sambandha is reveller (śāstra) and revealed (jīva-brahma aikyam).

### CATUSSŪTRI:

In the first four sūtras famously known as Catussūtri, the entire subject matter is discussed. All the later sūtras only elaborate what is discussed in the first four sūtras. Hence the study of first four sūtras would give the complete view of Brahma Sūtra and also the entire vision of Vedās.

### TOPICS:

The four adhyāyās discussed are Samanvaya, Avirodha, Sādhana and Phala adhyāyās. samanvaya adhyāyā establishes that Brahman is consistently the central theme of Upaniṣads. Avirodha adhyāyā establishes that there is non contradiction of Brahma vidhyā with Śruti, Smṛti and Yukti. Sādhana adhyāyā explains the preparatory disciplines needed for gaining Brahma Vidhyā. Phala adhyāyā gives mokṣa as the benefit of Brahma Vidhyā.

Each adhikaraṇa has five components. They are Viṣaya or subject matter, Saṁsaya, or doubt, Pūrvapakṣa or view of non-vedāntin, Siddhānta or Vedāntic conclusion to be established after refuting all conflicting views and Saṅgat or connection between previous topic and current topic.

### **PŪRVA PAKṢI'S VIEWS:**

There are six nāstika darśanās which do not accept Vedās as pramāṇa. They are Cāruvāka, Jaina, Sautāntika buddhisam, Vaibhāṣika buddhism, Yogācāra buddhism and mādhyamika buddhism. There are six āstika darśanās which accept Vedās as pramāṇa. They are Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Pūrvā Mīmāṃsa and Uttara Mīmāṃsa. The first four āstika darśanas use Vedās for support and depend more on logic. The last two accept Vedās as exclusive pramāṇa. The defects of the six nastika darśanās and the first four āstika darśanās are pointed out. The limitation of Pūrvā Mīmāṃsa is explained.

### **ADHYĀSA BHĀṢYA:**

Śaṅkara's introduction starts with adhyāsa bhāṣya. Without adhyāsa there is no Vedānta. There is confusion between ātma and anātma. Ātma is mistaken for the jīva. Jīva is mistaken for the ātma. This is super imposition or adhyāsa of the attributes of one thing on another thing. Adhyāsa or error is due to ignorance. The error causes saṁsāra. Snake perception on rope is due to adhyāsa. Mixing up of satyam and mithyā causes adhyāsa. Adhyāsa will go away when ajñānam, the cause of adhyāsa goes away.

Ātma lends consciousness to body, mind and sense complex. But ātma and body

belong to different orders of reality. There is only ādhyāsika sambandha between ātma and body. Āham asmi āham bāmi is satyam. Identification with sthūla śarīra, sukṣma śarīra or kāraṇa śarīra is adhyāsa.

Even after knowing ātmā bādhita, avidyā will continue, like one seeing the blueness of sky.

### **FIRST SŪTRA: JIJÑĀSĀ ADHIKARAṆAM: ATHĀ'TO BRAHMA JIJÑĀSĀ**

The first sūtra means, "Thereafter, therefore, one desires to know Brahman". Ātha śabda is also maṅgala sūcakam. The subject of Jīva Brahma aikyam is not discussed in karma khāṇḍa. As this is a new subject, this has to be discussed now. Only from śāstra we can know that there deha vyatirikta ātmā.

Anubandha catuṣṭaya is established in the first sūtra. There are adhikāris who have the requisite qualification prescribed..

Is Brahman known? If it is already known, then it need not be discussed. If Brahman is not known, how can one have a desire to know Brahman? Due to statements in Veda, which glorify Brahman and due to teaching of elders, there is āpatata jñānam or partial knowledge about Brahman.

The student develops viveka and understands the futility of pursuits of dharma artha and kāma. He understands that mokṣa is the only worthwhile pursuit. After gaining the requisite qualification and understanding the futility of other pursuits, one desires to know Brahman.

*Report by N.Avinashilingam*