

BOOK RELEASE

BRAHMASUTRA- SHANKARABHASHYAM

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY SWAMI SHUDDHABODHANANDA SARASWATI

Sri Swami Shuddhabodhananda Saraswati released on 26th Feb., 2017, the book Brahmāsutra Shankarabhashyam (chatussutri) with translation and commentary (in English) authored by him. Sri Swamiji spoke on the occasion as follows.

Brahmāsutra analytically establishes the exact and authentic nature of Brahman, the means to gain Brahmajñana and the result of such knowledge. It is out of the three canonical texts of Vedānta, as it satisfies the doubting and questioning human mind. In the English Vedāntic literature to date, topics of vital importance such as the exact nature of aparoksha-jñana, moksha, the nature of Vedānta pramāna, when pramāna fails to function etc. are rarely described. On the contrary, several wrong notions about these are found freely floating around on mere hearsay. The lacuna is made good by this commentary, which is an outcome of thorough research.

The translation is fluent and the commentary is exhaustive. With the addition of multiple index both novice and the advanced students of Vedānta can get benefited by this book alike. Even the Vedāntic teachers will find it very useful and highly revealing. They can be more authentic and precise in their teaching. The unique characteristics of this commentary is that it is totally based on the solid foundation of unshakable śāstra-pramāna. There is nothing said on hearsay. An elaborate discussion on the exact nature of the direct Brahmajñana / Atmajñana is one of the special features of the commentary.

Unfortunately nowadays, there is a lot of confusion and lack of clarity in Vedāntic teaching and more so on the nature of aparoksha atmajñana. Due to their ignorance, some people unknowingly advocate a purva-paksha (contrary view) having its basis in purvamīmāṃsā as the Vedāntic doctrine and profess that the actual doctrine is wrong. As a result, we have two streams of thoughts in the modern Vedāntic teaching. Some claim that the experience of atma is indispensable in gaining self-knowledge without explaining its precise nature and the role, whereas the others refute it outright.

Now who can give a verdict? If we conclude something based on the observations of our limited intellect, it is bound to be pouruṣheya - a product of human conjecture. The best way is to explore the śāstra-pramāna and find out if this controversy is discussed anywhere conclusively in Vedāntic lore. Actually, this is an age-old dispute and not a modern one. Acknowledged Vedāntic masters have specifically addressed this dispute with a clear verdict. They point out that there is a clear cut difference in the mode of gaining (or imparting) knowledge in purvamīmāṃsā (karmakāṇḍa) and uttaramīmāṃsā (jñanakāṇḍa) even though the same Veda is the pramāna for both. As a result the nature of knowledge differs drastically in the case of purvamīmāṃsā and in the case of Vedānta. This commentary had discussed this topic at length.

The authenticity of the tenets established in this text are duly corroborated without any exception by śāstra-pramāna such as Upanishads, Mandukya karika, Bhagavad-Gita, Ribhugita, Prasthanatrayi-bhashya, Yogavasishtha, Panchapadika, Vivarana-prameya-sangraha and some other standard Vedāntic prakarana-granthas. To disprove any of the doctrines appearing in this commentary, the corroborative śāstra-pramāna with its source or author will have to be refuted. Taking recourse to rambling semantics, pitching our puny intellect against the scriptural masters

beginning from Lord Shiva, Lord Krishna, sages Vasishtha and Ribhu, Gaudapadacharya, Bhashyakara, Sureswaracharya, Padmapadacharya, Vidyaranya Muni etc. will amount to a rank hubris on our part. It is highly desirable that we verify the correctness of the tenets established in the book, with an open unbiased mind.

I consider myself thrice blessed because Bhagavan chose these hands of mine to complete this book. There is nothing in this commentary based on speculative logic or outside the purview of scriptures. Let me make it very clear that I am merely a compiler and not a commentator though in vyavahara my name has to appear as a commentator. The guidance and inspiration are from HIM (Bhagavan) and the labour of love is mine. I will be very happy if maximum mumukshus take optimum advantage of this unique book.

Let me conclude my observation by quoting an exhortation by Sri Appayya Dixit, a famous Vedantic Master and a great devotee. He says: Aksharaani Pareekshyantaam, Ambaraadambarena Kim? ("Please examine the contents of the writings. What purpose can be served by a display of external pomp?")

On this occasion I would also like to announce that acceding to the requests from different quarters, henceforth my teachings will be available on:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXdkWrxk_jfyHUZvkkDCLdw.

For further details refer to the website.



Swamiji and class

Copies of the book are available with the publisher: Sri Visweswar Trust, Mumbai, sssbvt@gmail.com ; <https://rubhuvasishtha.wordpress.com/> ; Tel +91 993 090 2115

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1)Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh, Uttaranchal 249 201, India

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Email: office@asravidya.in

Tel: +91 422 2657001

Report by Sudhakar Shanbhag