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Vedas are four in number, i.e., Īgveda, Yajurveda, Sūmaveda and Atharvaveda. Each of them is divided into four parts: Samhitā-s, Brāhma-s, Ēra.ya enthusiast and Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads are collectively
known as Vedintas. Vedintasutra (Brahmasutra) is the basic text of Vedinta philosophy. Another name of Brahmasutra is Uttaramamjumsutra or ájrerakasutra. The philosophical teachings of the UpaniÁads are systematized by Bidaríya in the form of sÁtras.

SÁtra is defined thus:

\[
\text{alpikÁaramasandhigdham sjravat vijvatomukham}
\]

\[
\text{astobham anavadyam ca sÁtram sÁtravidó viduÁ}
\]

**Brahmasutra text and contents**

Brahmasutra has four chapters, namely, Samanvaya, Avirodha, Sídhana and Phala. Each chapter is divided into 4 adhyÁya-s, 4 pída-s, 191 adhikara-s and 555 sÁtra-s. The reading of the sÁtra-s may vary
from commentator to commentator. Sometimes, one sEtra is read as
two or two as one. Sometimes, the last word of a sEtra is treated as the
beginning of the next sEtra. Again, a sEtra may be regarded as the
PervapakÅa by one commentator; while another one may regard the
same sEtra as SiddhÎnta. The sEtra-s are far too many and cover a wide
range of philosophical and non-philosophical topics.

**Samanvaya AdhyÎya**

The first chapter of *BrahmasEtra* (Samanvaya) is devoted to a
discussion on the nature of Brahman. The beginning of the chapter
offers the definition of Brahman, and Brahman as the sole cause of the
origin, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. The first section
discusses the nature of the individual soul, the universe, the supreme
spirit and of divine meditation. The second section discusses the
different expressions prescribed in different sūtras for divine
meditation, indicating the ultimate principle, i.e., Brahman. The third
section continues the same discussion. It discusses the infinite soul
distinct from matter and the individual soul. The last section refutes
pradhāna as the efficient, instrumental and material cause of the
universe.

Avrodha Adhyāya

The second chapter of Brahma-sūtra is known as Avirodhādhyāya.

The first section of the chapter discusses the theory of Brahman as the
cause of the universe. The second section of the second chapter presents the refutation of other theories attempting to explain the causation of the universe. The other theories are —(1) blind matter, (2) the cohesion of atoms, (3) the idea and the impression, (4) the reunion of the co-eternal body and the soul, (5) the conjunction of the inactive spirit with the inanimate matter, and (6) energy independent of spirit. The third section discusses the order of creation according to the āruti.

**Sūdhana Adhyāyā**

The third chapter of *Brahmasūtra* is known as Sūdhāndhyāya. It discusses the means for the attainment of Brahmajīna. The first section discusses the journey of the departing soul and the cause of
rebirth, etc. The second section discusses the nature of dream, sound sleep and swoon. The nature of the Supreme Self and its relation to the individual soul and to the universal are also discussed. The third section deals with meditation and classification of the forms of meditation and the aspect of the soul upon which the mind ought to be fixed. The last section discusses the aim of the worship of the Supreme Being.

**Phala Adhyāya**

The fourth and last chapter is designated as Phalādhyāya. The first section of the chapter studies the conception of the universal soul, the place of a symbol in the estimation of the meditator, the time and
place devoted to meditation, the posture of the meditator and the released soul in his corporeal existence. The second section of the last chapter depicts the journey of the enlightened soul on his way to the region of everlasting bliss. The last section discusses portions like the relation of the released soul to the Supreme Soul. Differences of opinion on the nature of release are also discussed in this section. These are the four chapters of Brahmasūtra.

Prominent Vedāntins have written commentaries to Brahmasūtra. Āaṅkara, Rīmēnuja, Madhvī, Vallabha, Nimbirka, etc., have each expounded a system of philosophy. Each commentary of them represents a distinctive viewpoint of Vedāntic thought.
Brahmaşêtra áîrerakabhêyâ or áîreraka Mêmîmsabhêyâ

áa’kara’s commentary on the Brahmasêtra is known as áîreraka Mêmîmsabhêyâ. It is considered as the oldest of all commentaries on the Brahmasêtra. It propounds a bold philosophy and declares emphatically that the individual soul is identical with the Supreme Self.

In áa’kara’s words, the sêtrîs string together the flowers in the form of Upaniṣadic statements. They are intended to discuss the teachings found in the Upaniṣads.

In Bhêyâigrattha-s, áa’kara effectively used the PêrvapakÀa — Samîdhîna method. His major work, Brahmasêtrabhêyâ, is ample evidence for this. In the Samanvaya adhyîya, áa’kara examines
methodically all the important passages of the major Upaniṣads which
have direct and indirect reference to Brahman, to determine its nature,
and rules out from the purview of Reality other ontological entities such
as Pradhāna, atom, etc., which are claimed to be the cause of the
universe. After critical examination, it is concluded that Brahman is the
material and efficient cause of the universe.

In Avirodha-dhyāya, āaṅkara refutes the philosophical theories of
Nyāya-Vaiṣeṣika, Śāmkhya, Pārvamāṇa-sa, Jainism, Buddhism,
Pañcaritra, Pijūpata, Čārvaka, etc., for the establishment of Advaita.
āaṅkara refuted the contradictory ideas of these schools. He never
denied their whole philosophy.
In the Sadhanādhyāya, ākara vividly presents the development of non-attachment (vairīgya), Upasānī-s, and different types of vidyā-s to be practiced for the realization of Brahman.

In the Phalādhyāya, ākara examines the nature of the supreme goal of human endeavour (puruṣārtha). He observes the exit of the individual soul from the physical body at the time of self-realization, the nature of mokṣa, etc.

ākara gave inspiration to the rise of the prasthāna-s in Advaita Vedānta, ie., Bhāmati Prasthāna and Vivara, a Prasthāna. There are a large number of the commentaries on Brahmasūtra.

Methodology of ākara
The method of presentation is as important as the presentation of subject matter. Methodology is defined as a set of rules and processes in doing things in a defined way. When we study and perceive the mission of life and teachings of āa’kara, we can understand that he can claim to have devised a methodology of his own.

Writing Commentaries

āa’kara elaborated his philosophy through his commentaries on the Prasthanatraya and other works. The remarkable achievement and commitment of āa’kara have made him a unique Bhāyakīra. In his commentary, he himself raises doubts and refutes them, using the portions from the Vedic texts.
áruti as pramāṇa

íá’kara accepts the authority of áruti. He asserts that áṣṭra-s are the only source of knowledge to decide what is dharma and what is adharma. According to him, the individual cannot rely upon himself for the knowledge of dharma and adharma. For the attainment of knowledge, the individual accepts the authority of áruti. In his concept, the áṣṭras are not only the authority for what ought to be done but also they are the final authority and valid means of knowledge. According to íá’kara’s words in Getibhāya, the Upaniṣads, itihāsapuris and Smārtis are considered to be the áṣṭra-s. He says in Brahmaśtrabhāya—“If there is any conflict between áruti and Smāti,
or among smātis regarding some point of view, the áruti or smāti which agrees with the upaniñāda should be accepted”⁵. According to him, the ájstra-s are not authoritative in connection with the things of immediate experience. If áruti says that fire is cold, one should not believe it because the quality of the fire is known by perception. In áa’kara’s thought, the role of the teacher for the attainment of knowledge is very much important. So, the teacher is necessary for everyone. He says that in many texts it is proved that knowledge is attained from ájstra-s with the help of a teacher⁶. He accepted ájstra as a valid means of knowledge.

Adhikara, a Method
In Mēmśa and Vedānta philosophy, the word *adhikara, a*
signifies method of presentation. In the Śētra period of Sanskrit, we can
see a wide application of this method. Śētra works are divided into
*adhyāya, pīda, adhikara, a* and *var,aka.* *Adhikara, a* contains the
complete treatment of a particular topic. Traditionally, *adhikara, a* is
defined thus:

“*viśaya viśaya caiva pĕrvapakāastatotaram*

*sāgati ca phalam ceti ādhyāram vidudā”*

An adhikara, a has six parts, ie., *viśaya, samjaya, pĕrvapakāa, uttara, saṅgati* and *phala.* In the *adhikara, a* method, the most
important thing is the systematic way of presentation and it gives equal
importance “to the clash of ideas. So áa’kara used this type of method in his bhāṣya for the establishment of his theory”.

**Refutations of opponent views**

Indian philosophy progressed through the conflict of different systems. áa’kara refutes the other systems, but his criticism is confined to only certain points of the particular system and is not a criticism of the system as a whole. In his view, the people are in need of a direction to get liberation. In his way of thought, for getting the right meaning of the upaniṣads etc., the rejection of opponent’s views is necessary. Therefore, he took up the method of interpretation of the opponents concepts.
According to áa’kara, only the Advaita way of thinking shows the right path to self-realization. So he refutes the conflicting points of the other systems which are not accepted by áruti.

In the commentary of Brahmasūtra, áa’kara uses the Adhikara, a method because this method gave more importance to the systematic way of presentation. With the help of the Adhikara, a method, áa’kara presented the Pṛrvapakṣa and his Siddhānta. In Brahmasūtraḥāya, áa’kara takes the orthodox and heterodox systems of Indian Philosophy as Pṛrvapakṣa. They are, Śūmkhya-Yoga, Nyāya-Vaiṣeṣika, Pṛsvemśmśa, Baudhā, Jaina, Cjrvīka, Paµcā tra and Pāñjupata.
1. Śāmkhya-yoga

The Satkṛtyāvṛda of Śāmkhya is partly recognised by āśkara.

Against the Śāmkhya philosophy, he points out the danger of holding

the insentient pradhāna as the cause of the universe. Commenting on

such passages of the Brahmasūtra, he states that pradhāna is not the

cause of the universe. He asks, “So how can the insentient pradhāna

create this universe which cannot be mentally received by the intelligent

and most far-famed arbitrates, which is seen in the external context to

consist of the earth etc, in which the limits are arranged according to a
regular design, and which are seen as the seats for experiencing various "fruits of action".

The Śīmkhya-Yoga concepts which have been discussed by ākara for refutation are:

1. Pradhñakira, avjda – Śīmkhya argues that the ultimate cause of the universe is pradhñ̤a. 2. The plurality of self. 3. Existence of God.

2. Nyśya – VaiṣeĀika

ākara’s basic epistemological outlook of perceiving the unity beyond multiplicity and non-duality beyond duality was shaped particularly in the debate with Nyśya philosophy. In ākara’s time, the Nyśya-VaiṣeĀika tradition seems to have given too much importance to
the analytical way of thinking and discussion which over-emphasized perceptual validity of particularity. The Vaiṣeṣika opposed the possibility of Brahman being the cause of the universe. By giving answers to such arguments, ākāra not only established the logical soundness of his own position, but also questioned the logical basis of the Vaiṣeṣika cosmology. The Vaiṣeṣika atomic concept is strictly refuted by ākāra.

3. Pārvamēṃmsa
The Mēmśmsaka-s have necessitated a classification of āa’kara’s attitude to the scriptures. According to them, the authenticity of the scriptures enjoins ritualistic Karma.

In responding to such a criterion proposed by the Mēmśmsaka-s for the authority of āruti, āa’kara says that knowledge of Brahman is not caused by any injunction or action. He establishes that it happened by the authority of the scriptures. The following are the fundamental concepts certified by āa’kara.

1. The āruti-pramāṇa is unique and not comparable to other pramāṇa-s.

2. The knowledge of Brahman is not an intellectual knowledge but a realization beyond all subject-object dualism.
4. Jainism

The Jaina concepts of Saptabhaṅgenaya or Syādvāda, and of the soul having the size of the body, are refuted by áaṅkara.

5. Buddhism

áaṅkara attempts to study the Buddhist doctrine which differs from school to school in the Buddhist sect. The causal theory, universal flux, etc., are subjected to discussion by him. áaṅkara refutes the concepts which are not favourable to him.

6. Pñ upata

áaṅkara criticizes the concept of Pañ upati as the efficient cause of the universe.
7. Bhagavata (Pañcaritra)

Sankara criticized the Pañcaritra concept about the origination of Jiva from God.

8. Cīrvikā.

āā`kara mainly criticizes the Cīrvikā view that the body is the soul. As in many other instances, he stresses the need for acknowledging a conscious agent.

This chapter tries to analyze how, why, when and for what āā`kara negates the concepts of these philosophical systems. This we can
learn only through a wide study of the concepts negated by āa’kara.

How this method helps āa’kara for the formation of the Advaita Philosophy also has a wide scope. As in the bhāya of Brahmasūtra, in many of his other works also, āa’kara follows the method of analysing concepts against the background of different concepts of other systems of philosophy. For example, Daśaṃloki explicitly proclaims that the absolute truth is not what is proclaimed by Śīmkhya-Yoga, Pauçcaritra, etc. Madhusūdana Saraswati of the 16th century, in his commentary, has elaborated on this īloka by explaining the concepts of Advaita as well as of other systems. In his vṛtika of Dakṣājīmśristotram, Sureśvara, the direct disciple of āa’kara, has
delineated the different concepts of other systems from Advaitic concepts, on the basis of ऋक्षa-s in it. Also in Upadeśasāhasri⁹ and Sarvavedintaśiddhanta-sūrasamgraham, the relevance of examining the philosophical concepts of other systems has been pointed out. It is in Brahmasūtrasāvyā that he has laid down the logical foundation of Advaita philosophy, analysing the distinct features of it, against the backdrop of other systems.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *vedjntavjkyakusumagrathanarthatvits£trj, jm*. BSSB. 1.1.2.2.


3. *ayam dharmiyamadharma iti jstrameva vijµine kµrajra, am*. BSSB 3.1.2.5
sarvopaniśastu itihśapurī ayogaśīstreśu ca ājñānab-dhena mumukśa sarvakarma sannyāsa vidhiṁ dhērāma-vikalpasamuccaya

vidhiṁcca ārutismētyō, B.G. Bhāya 3.

vipratipattau ca smātenāmavāyakartavye anyatarapari-grīhe anyataraparityuge ca ārutyanusūriya śmaṭaya śmaṭayē pramā, amanapekṣāy itarē BSSB. 2.1.1.1

vedānticryopadeśīnyairakṣatabuddhitṣamskātabuddhit-vit, yopi
dehādivyatirikτtmavidi ṯtmānameva, B.G. Bhāya 18.16.
7 na śīmkhyam na āivam na tat paṃcarītram na jainam na
memṃmaskidermatam vi viśiṅgījaṇubhētya viṣuddhīt-makatvī
ttadekovaiājaśīva kevaloham, D.S. 4

8 evam piśupatamatam, paṃcarītramatam, jainam trai-da-am ca
matam ārutiyuktibidhitattidayuktam S.B. 4

9 tasmīdbhrjntiratonya hi bandhamokādikalpanā śīm-
khyaka, idabuddhīnjm memṃsīrhatakpanā, U.S. 16.68.