CHAPTER III

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMENTARIES ON BRAHMASUTRA

Introduction - author of Brahmasutra - date of Brahmasutra - nature and content of Brahmasutra - Samanvayadhyaya - avirodhadhyaya - sadhanadhyaya - Phaladhyaya - the importance of Brahmasutra - important commentaries on Brahmasutra - Sri Saṅkara - Bhaskara - Yadavaprakāśa - Ramanuja-Madhva - Nimārka Śrikantha - Śripati - Vallabha - Śuka - Viśnunabhikṣu - Baladeva - Sadaśivabrahmendra - Pāṇcānana tāvākaratna bhattacarya - Conclusion
INTRODUCTION

Brahmasūtra is intended to be a summary of the teachings of the Upaniṣads. It is also called Vedāntasūtra or Śārīrakasūtra. Brahman is Śiva or the blessed. The Māṇḍūkyakārīka calls Brahman as 'Śāntam śivam - Advaitam.' Brahman is Śanta or the tranquil, Śiva or the blessed, Advaita or the non-dual. The word Brahman is indicative of completeness, perfection, infinitude, eternity and absoluteness, of being which is of the nature of intelligence and bliss, wherein all power is hidden.

Each of the great schools of Vedānta has developed its system through its commentaries on the triple texts. The B.S. of Vyāsa is the third source book of the Vedānta school. It occupies a key-position.

2. The triple texts - Prasthānātraya, (i) Upaniṣads, (ii) Bhagavadgītā and (iii) Brahmasūtra.
in the 'Prasthānātraya'. It is because of the importance of B.S. that all the different propagators of the Vedānta system have invariably relied on it. Of course there have been differences of opinion among ācāryas as regards the purport of B.S. Such differences have led to the origin of different commentaries which in their own way have enriched the Vedānta system of Indian Philosophy. B.S. has actually become the basis on which the philosophical thought of Vedānta is built. B.S. is the attempt to offer a system based on the teachings of Upaniṣads.

Author of Brahmasūtra

Tradition has it that Bādarāyaṇa or Vedavyāsā, the son of Parasara and Satyavatī is the author of B.S. He compiled the Vedas and composed the Mahābhārata. Whether Bādarāyaṇa and Vedavyāsa are one and the same person or not has been a matter of dispute among the Western scholars. We may however assume that Bādarāyaṇa

3- "Vedam vyasati iti prthak karoti iti vedavyasaḥ"

4. Devibhāgavatam.IV.
and Vedavyāsa are the same and is the author of B.S.

**Date of Brahmasutra**

Since B.S. refers to almost all other Indian systems, its date cannot be very early. Jacobi thinks that the B.S. was composed sometimes between A.D. 200 and 450.\(^5\) Maxmuller calculates the period of Sūtra literature from 600 to 200 B.C.\(^6\) Prof. Dasgupta says that B.S. was written in the 2nd century B.C.\(^7\) Indian scholars are of opinion that, the B.S. was composed sometime between 500 B.C. and 200 B.C.\(^8\) We may thus assume with reasonable accuracy that the date of B.S. is II\(^{\text{nd}}\) century B.C.

**Nature and Content of the Brahmasutra**

The B.S. has four well-knit chapters or adhya-\(\text{yās}^{\text{v}}\) viz. Samanvayaadhyāya, Avirodhaadhyāya, Sadhanaadhyāya and Phalaadhyāya. Each of them is divided into four pādās or divisions. Each division is again subdivided into various topics (adhikaraṇas). Each topic

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is discussed in one Sūtra or sometimes in a number of Sūtras. A sutra is so called because it suggests a wide meaning. The number of Sūtras in each adhikarana varies with the nature of the topic dealt with. The total number of the Sūtras in the text comes 555. If an adhikarana has more than one Sūtra, the first is the main (mukhya) and the others are subordinate to it. Each section according to the commentators deals with a specific point, criticises the views of others on that specific point and then offers commentary of its own. The commentary is a reasoned statement of objections (Pūrvapakṣa) and answers (Uttarapakṣa or Siddhānta). The B.S. strings together in the Vedānta texts like flowers, in a garland. According to Pūrvamīmāṃsa, every section or adhikarana has five factors:—(i) Viśayi (subject matter) (ii) viṣaya (iii) Pūrvapakṣa (prima-facie view)

9. (i) Laghūmi sūcitārthāni svalpākṣarapadāni ca Sarvataḥ sarabhūtanisūtrāṇyāhumāni śiṃaḥ
MBS, I.1.1.
(ii) alpākṣaram asandigdham saravat viswato mukhaṁ astobham anavadyam ca sūtram sūtravido viduḥ, niruktam, I

10. Vedāntavākyā kusumagrathānārthatvāt sūtraṇām
(iv) Siddhānta (final truth of an argument) and
(v) Sangathi (connection between different sections).

The B.S. is regarded as nyāyaprasthāna, because it sets forth the teaching of Vedānta in a logical order. This is also known as Vedāntasūtra, since it is the aphoristic text on Vedānta or Śārīrakasūtra, as it is concerned with the nature and destiny of the embodied soul or Bhikṣusūtra, since the Sanyāsins are the competent persons to study it or Uttaramīmāṃsasūtra, and since it is an inquiry into the final sections of the Vedas. Śrīmat Bhāgavadgīta pays a handsome tribute to the B.S. It refers to it as the reasoned and decisive pronouncement with regards to what has been set forth by the ancient rṣis in their utterances. 11

B.S. deals with (i) Brahman the highest reality and its nature, (ii) Jagat - its status (iii) evolution of Jīva - its nature and the means to attain it. Brahman

is the material and efficient cause of the universe. Let us examine briefly the chapterwise content of the B.S.

I. Samanvayādhyāya

The first chapter deals with Samanvaya. It attempts to offer a coherent interpretation of the different texts of the Upaniṣads. It deals with the Supreme Reality of Brahman. Its purpose is to reconcile all the vedic statements to this effect. The nature of Brahman, its relationship to the world and the individual soul are described here.

The first pāda of this adhyāya consists of thirty-one Śūtras, distributed in eleven adhikaraṇas. Brahman has been regarded as the cause of origin, existence and dissolution of the whole universe. In the later part of this pāda certain terms such as ānandamaya, jyoti, pṛāṇa, Ākāśa etc. used in different senses in Śrutis have been examined.
The second pada describes the non-difference of Brahman and the individual soul. There are seven adhikaranaś that expound this view.

In the third pada, the subject of discussion is Nirguna-brahman. There are fourteen adhikaranaś in this pada.

The fourth pada, purports to refute the Sāmkhya system. This pada examines some passages of Upaniśads which are mistaken for the names of the insentient matter of Sāmkhyas. This pada sets outs to prove that Brahman is the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe.

II. Avirodha-dhyāya

The second chapter which is entitled 'non-conflict' or Avirodha shows that the interpretation offered in the first chapter is not inconsistent with the writing of other sages and the views of other systems. Even when the Sūtras were formulated, they reckoned with other
views and objections from rival schools. Truth would not be sought so industriously if it had no rivals to contend against. It is in the form of a re-enforcement of the philosophical position of the Sūtrakāra. Certain purely logical objections that could possibly be brought against the soundness of the Sūtrakāra's views about the nature and attributes of Brahman and its relation to the world of matter and souls are answered. A direct refutation is made of the doctrines of other established schools of philosophy which are likely to challenge the claims of the Sūtrakāra to exclusive philosophical soundness and sufficiency.

The first pāda discusses Smṛtinyāyaparihāra. Smṛтивirodha is resolved in the first, second, third and twelveth Sūtras. Nyāyavirodha is treated in the rest of the Sūtras. This pāda is spread over thirteen adhikāraṇas.

The aim of the second pāda is to refute by arguments independent of vedic passages, the more important philosophical theories concerning the origin of the world which are opposed to the Vedānta view. This pāda is in seven adhikāraṇas.
The third pada consists of seventeen adhikaraṇas. The fourth pada in nine adhikaraṇas brings a unity of purport in the divergent and inconsistent thoughts of the Upaniṣadic passages. The arguments based on a reasoning against the doctrine which speaks of Brahman as the first cause, are refuted.

III. Sadhanādhyāya

The third adhyāya known as Sadhanādhyāya deals with the means of the realization of Brahman, the modus operandi of vidyās, upāsanas and other forms of disciplines.

The first pada teaches the doctrine of re-birth, the departure of the soul from the physical body, its journey to the Chandraloka and its coming back to the earth. This process is explained to induce abstinence from the sensual enjoyment here and hereafter. This pada contains six adhikaraṇas.

The second pada in eight adhikaraṇas explains
the different stages of souls viz. waking, dream and deep sleep. A knowledge of these three stages is quite essential for the real knowledge of the self. The enlightened souls when they leave the body, travel through the path of God. The Sutrakāra explains the statements in scriptures that deal with the passing out of soul from the body.

The third pada in thirty-six adhikaraṇas explains the end and aim of the vidyas as prescribed in the Śrutis. All the Vidyas ultimately aim at the realization of Brahman. The Śrutis describe various kinds of Vidyas to enable the aspirant to attain knowledge of Brahman.

The fourth pada in fifteen adhikaraṇas discusses whether the knowledge of Brahman is connected with any ritualistic work or not. The question whether one is entitled to perform any independent act to accomplish the final purpose is also examined here.

IV. Phalādhyāya

The closing adhyāya is called Phalādhyāya.
It deals with the goal of *Brahmajijnāsa*, viz., *Moksa*. It gives a detailed account of the successive stages of spiritual ascent such as *utkrānti*, destruction of the lingadeha and the complete realization of unalloyed spiritual bliss and of the status of released souls in relation to *Brahman*.

In the first pada a separate discussion connected with the means of knowledge is made with in a few adhikaraṇas. There are fourteen adhikaraṇas in this pada.

The second pada in eleven adhikaraṇas explains the departure of the enlightened and the unenlightened souls. The two remaining padas, pada III in six adhikaraṇas and pada IV in seven adhikaraṇas describe the fate of the Vidvān after death.

The Importance of Brahmasūtras

The importance of B.S. is enormous and without them we would not have been able to unify the definitive
message of the apparently conflicting passages in the Upaniṣads which form the basis of Vedānta. Hence they hold the key-position for the proper understanding of Vedānta. They are not only interpretative but also critical.

The aim of B.S. is to represent the teaching of the Upaniṣads in a consistent way. The Sūtras help us to systematise the apparently varied strands in the Upaniṣads. It is called a Nirṇāyakaśāstra. It makes use of the six determinates marks of purport - tātparya-linga to explain the meaning of Upaniṣads. The marks are the initial and the concluding passages, repetition, novelty, the fruit of the quest, eulogistic passages commending the activity and deprecatory passages denouncing some acts, and intelligibility. With the help of these marks meaning is determined.

12. "Upakramo upasamhārāv abhyāsopūrvata phalam arthāvādopapattisca lingaṃ tātparyanirṇaye".
Important Commentaries on Brahmasūtra

All the Vedāntic texts in India today hold B.S. to be of irrefutable authority and the various ācāryas who have founded a sect have commented on these Sūtras. The oldest extant commentary on it is by Śaṅkara, the exponent of monism. Śaṅkara was followed by a host of commentators, all of whom have raised their voice against the monistic explanations of Śaṅkara and his doctrine of Māyā and have given a theistic interpretation of these Sūtras, but there are various shades of differences amongst themselves. The important commentators who came after Śaṅkara are - Rāmanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Śrīkaṇṭha, Bhāskara, Yadavaprakāśa, Nimbārka, Śrīpati, Viśṇunābhikṣu, Baldeva, and Śuka. The total number of Sūtras too differs in the various commentaries. Sometimes a single Sūtra is split into two or two Sūtras are combined into one, or a Sutra is dropped, or a new one is added. The readings of the Sutra also differ in the various commentaries and the addition of a single letter like 'tu' (but) 'ca' (and) or 'a' (the negative) makes the meaning basically different. Some of the words too used in the Sūtras are
very ambiguous, for in the Upanisads themselves they convey
different meanings in different places. All these give
the commentators freedom to interpret the Śūtras according
to their predilections. Each of the commentators tries
to maintain that his system is the one that Bādarāyāna
propounded through the Śūtras.

Though there have been many commentaries on
the Brahmaśūtra only a few are now available. Dr. S. Radha-
krishnan says that Bodhayana was the first commentator.
But the commentary is not available at present. He also
gives a chronological list of twelve other commentators
whom he thinks estimable.¹³ They are the following:

1. Śaṅkara       A.D. 788-820  Nirviṣēṣaḍvaita
2. Bhāskara     1000          Bhedabheda
3. Yādavapraḳaśa 1000          Bhedabheda
4. Rāmānuja     1017-1137     Viśiṣṭādvaita (e)
5. Madhva        1238-1317     Dvaita
6. Nimbārka      1250          Dvaitādvaita
7. Śrīkaṇṭha     1270          Saivaviṣiiṣṭādvaita

¹³ Radhakrishna, S (Dr.) Trans., Introduction to the
Brahmasūtras, p.27.
Besides these there are two other commentators viz., Sadāśivabrahmendra and Pañcānanatarkaratnakaratabhacārya. 

*Brahmasūtra* is the basic text on which the tenets of different schools of *Vedānta* are founded. Hence it has become imperative on the part of every propounder of each system to write a commentary on *Brahmasūtra*. There are, therefore, as many commentaries as there are *Vedāntic* schools, and the varying interpretations of fourteen among them, which seem significant, are briefly surveyed in the following pages.

1. *Śrī Śaṅkara*

Śrī Śaṅkara, the grand disciple of the famous Gaudapāda, and believed to be an incarnation of Lord Śiva.¹⁴

14. Sambhombūrītiscari bhuvane Śaṅkarācārya rūpāḥ

Radhākrishnan, S(Dr.), *Brahmasūtras — The Philosophy of spiritual life*, p.28.
is an illustrious commentator on Brahmasūtra. He was a naiṣṭīkabrahmacārin and his brief life on this planet was spent in the exposition, discussion and organisation of religious and philosophical tenets. He established four well-known muṭhs - Dwāraka in the west, Puri in the East, Badari in the North and Śrīneri in the South. His commentary is well-known for its depth of spirit and subtlety of speculation.

The first Sūtra of the B.S. is "Athāto Brahma-jijñāsā". "Now, therefore an inquiry into the knowledge of Brahman". The word 'Now' and 'therefore' in this Sūtra are interpreted differently by different commentators.

Śaṅkara, the founder of 'Nirvīṣėśādvaita', takes 'now' in the sense of 'immediate consecution', the antecedent facts referred to being the four Śadhanas or spiritual requisites. The root cause of bondage is the superimposition of the self and not-self on each other owing to ignorance. Release is attained by the removal of ignorance through the intuitive knowledge of the unity of

15. "Nityānityavastu vivekaḥ, ihāmutrārthaphalaphoga-virāgaḥ, Śamādi śaṭkasampatti, Mumukṣutvamāca".
The word 'therefore' expresses a reason and is interpreted by him to mean, 'As the results obtained by sacrifices etc. are ephemeral and whereas the result of the knowledge of the \textbf{Brahman} is eternal, the inquiry into \textbf{Brahman} should be taken up. \textbf{Brahman} is the Ultimate Reality. That infinite, birthless, undecaying, indestructible, immortal and fearless self is \textbf{Brahman}. He who knows the Self indeed becomes the fearless \textbf{Brahman}.\textsuperscript{16} This is the gist of the whole \textbf{Upanisads}.

\textbf{The Soul - Its Nature}

Sankara says that the individual soul is eternal and uncreated. It is the one \textbf{Brahman} without a second that enters the intellect and appears as the soul but in reality they are identical. The soul realizes its identity with \textbf{Brahman} in perfect meditation. So the relation is one of identity and not one of difference and non-difference, which is supported by the fact that the \textbf{Sruti} denies everything else besides \textbf{Brahman}. On

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Br.Up. IV.iv.25.}
realization of this knowledge all works, except those that have begun to operate in one's life (prārabdhakarma) are destroyed. The prārabdhamkarmas are exhausted by being worked out, and when this body falls off one attains perfection, becoming one with Brahman. Śaṅkara makes a twofold distinction among those who have attained knowledge viz., the knowledge of Nirguṇabrahman and Saguṇabrahman.

The organs of a knower of the Nirguṇabrahman do not depart, but get merged in It at death. The soul of a knower of Saguṇabrahman goes by the path of the Gods to Brahmāloka. The soul which has attained Brahmāloka fulfils its desires by mere volition.

According to Śaṅkara the Ultimate Reality is the one non-dual Brahman. It is Existence, Knowledge, and Infinity. It is mere existence and pure Consciousness. It is homogeneous without attributes. The one immutable Brahman appears as this diverse universe through Māyā which is indefinable. 17 The Brahman is formless, the

17. "Na sādṛupo nāsadrūpaḥ Māyā naivobhayātmikā sadasadbhyām anirvacaniyā mithyārūpi sanātani".
various forms are but its reflections like the reflections of the one Sun in different waters and are therefore unreal. Even Śiṅgara (Sagunabrahman) is in a way the product of Māya, being the highest reading of the attributeless Brahman by the individualized soul which serves the purpose of devotion and worship for man. Brahman is both the efficient and material cause of the world.

Śaṅkara upholds the theory of Vivartavāda, the doctrine that the world is the phenomenal appearance of Brahman. His main objective is to establish Vivartavāda as against Parināmavāda.

2. Bhāskara

He is the protagonist of the Bhedābheda school. He is a Parināmavādin. He looks upon the world of matter as the direct transformation of Brahman. His commentary on B.S. is a criticism of Sankara's Māyāvāda. His view is that both difference and non-difference arereal.

He also takes the word 'now' in the sense of
immediate sequence', but the antecedent referred to is the knowledge of the Pūrvāmāṃsa. He prescribes the combination of work with knowledge i.e. Jñānakarma-
samuccaya.

For him Brahman is differentiated and also non-differentiated. The non-differentiated formless aspect which is merely existence and consciousness is the causal state, and Brahman manifested as the world is the differentiated state. Brahman which is one appears as many owing to Upādhis. In the state of release, when the Upādhi is destroyed the soul attains its true nature, which has identity with Brahman. Thus Brahman actually experiences the sufferings and imperfections of the soul. It is Brahman which appears as the soul and finally attains release. Brahman is not something to be produced - utpādaya, but something to be attained - āpya. When the Upādhis are removed, the soul becomes one with Brahman - omniscient, omnipotent and all-pervading.

3. Yādavaprakāśa

Yādavaprakāśa who succeeded Bhāskara, made his
theory more realistic. He accepts Brahmapiñātavāda, the theory of the transformation of Brahman into the world. He postulates difference and non-difference as the essential relation between Brahman and the world. He does not recognize any fundamental distinction between cit and acit. For him Brahman, the Absolute is of the nature of pure universal being, "Sarvātmakā - sadrūpām Brahma", endowed with the three distinct powers of consciousness, matter and God. He holds that difference and non-difference express two fundamental aspects of the Absolute.

4. Rāmānuja

Rāmānuja, the founder of the Viśiṣṭādvaita school of Vedānta, wrote a commentary on B.S. It is called Śrī Bhāṣya. He was born in Tamilnadu. Besides the Śrībhāṣya he wrote two abridged commentaries on the Sūtra - (i) Vedāntasāra - It merely enunciate the meaning of the Sutras. The second is Vedānta - Dīpa that goes beyond the summary of conclusions and indicates the dialectical frame work. But Śrībhāṣya is the fullest and
all-sufficient commentary. Goddess Saraswati it is said, was so charmed by it that she blessed it with the prefix 'Śri'. In the compass of vision, fullness of execution, and splendour of style the Śrībhāṣya reaches heights of excellence.

He vehemently criticises the adhyāsa-bhāṣya, of Śankara, which is the foundation of the advaita school of metaphysics. He deals in detail with the Viśiṣṭādvaita doctrine of the relation between the supreme being and the particular being viz., Viśeṣavīseṣanabhāva. His style is rather recondite and heavily loaded with compounds and clauses in keeping with the intense emotional impact.

Rāmānuja also takes the word 'now' in the sense of 'immediate sequence', but the antecedent referred to is the knowledge of the Pūrvamīmāṃsa. He prescribed a combination of work and knowledge. Works performed without desires, as worship of the Lord, and combined with knowledge yield eternal result, viz., final release. Hence a knowledge of the Pūrvamīmāṃsa is necessary. His
criticisms are directed largely against the logical and dialectical exposition of the advaita doctrines as given by Śaṅkara and his disciples.

The word 'therefore' expresses a reason. But he adds the word 'mere' and says that 'mere works' are works those that are not combined with knowledge.

Rāmānuja refutes Śaṅkara's view of an attributeless, non-differentiated Brahman. According to him Brahman cannot be non-differentiated. For want of proof, all our experiences are only of qualified objects. It is the invariable characteristic found in an object, and nowhere else, that distinguishes it from others. So when Brahman is defined as 'Existence, Knowledge and Infinity.' It means that these three are qualities of Brahman which distinguish It from others. The words 'one only without a second,' do not mean that Brahman has no second even by way of quality, but from the context it is found to mean that besides Brahman there was nothing else which could be the efficient cause of the world. Brahman is eternal and so uncreated.

Rāmanuja also holds that souls are not created, they are birthless and eternal. Souls are effects of Brahman. At the time of creation the elements undergo a change in their essential nature and therefore they are said to be orginated, but the souls undergo no such changes. There is only an expansion of their intelligence making them fit to enjoy the fruits of their karma and so they are said to be uncreated. It pervades the body with its quality of intelligence. It is not knowledge, but has knowledge as its quality, for knowledge is different from the knower, like earth is different from its quality - smell.

5. Madhva

Madhva or Ānandatīrtha, the founder of Dvaita Vedānta or dualism, is the third classical commentator on B.S. He belonged to Tulunadu in Karpātaka. He appeared on the Indian Philosophical scene after the systems of Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja had been well established.

There are four commentaries written by Madhva,
on the Sutras. The first three are the most important
the Sūtrabhāṣya, the Anuvyakhyāna in verse and the Nyāya
vivaraṇa, dealing exclusively with the ergonomic details
of the adhikaraṇas.

Madhva takes the word 'now' with the qualification of the aspirant whom he classifies as ordinary, middling and the best. One who is devoted to and has taken refuge in the Lord and who has studied the Vedas, is dispassionate and one who has renounced all work is the best aspirant and he is fit for the knowledge of Brahman.

The word 'therefore' is indicative of a reason for the inquiry into Brahman. Without the knowledge of Brahman there is no grace of the Lord and without it there is no release. Therefore, an inquiry into Brahman should be made for attaining the knowledge.

He also holds that the Brahman has no origin for it is eternally existent. It is omniscient, the supreme reality is Īśwara (Viṣṇu). It is without an
equal and super-excellent, and hence it is said to be one without a second.

Madhva is a thorough going dualist. He declares the externally distinct and entirely separate entities viz., Brahman, matter (Prakṛti) and soul. The last two are dependent on Brahman who is their ruler. Brahman is the only absolute independent existence and everything else is finite, being conditioned by Brahman. It is knowledge and bliss. When Brahman is said to be unknowable and indescribable, it only means that It cannot be known completely nor described fully, for otherwise it is known and also described by the scriptures. Matter (Prakṛti) is also eternal, but dependent on Brahman and is capable of undergoing modifications. At creation it undergoes modification at the will of the God in accordance with the karma of particular souls. Thus Lord is only the efficient cause.

6. Nimbārka

Nimbarka lived in the latter half of the 13th century A.D. His commentary on the B.S. is called Vedānta-
parijāta-saurabha. According to him there are three equally real and co-eternal realities (tri-tattva) - Brahman, cit and acit. Brahman is the controller (niyantr), cit is the enjoyer (bhoktr) and acit is the enjoyed (bhogya). He adopts the view of Svābhāvikabhedābheda. Brahman's relation to cit and acit is not one of substance and attribute, but is that of cause and effect. Brahman is the material and efficient cause of the Universe of souls and matter.

7. 'Srikanṭha

He is another commentator on B.S. His system is known as 'Saivavisistādvaita'. According to him 'Śiva' is the Supreme Reality. He introduces his commentary with a statement that he is attempting to clarify the purpose of the B.S. which has been obscured by other commentators. For him the Supreme is identified with

20. "Vyāsasūtrāmidāṃ netram viduṣām Brahmadārsane pūrvācāryaiḥ kaluṣitām śrikanṭhena prasādyate Sarvavedānta sārasya samabhāsvādāmodinām Āryaṅgām Śivanisthaṅgāṃ bhaṣyaṃ etan-māhanidhiḥ".
Śiva, who is to be meditated on by all those who seek release. Śiva is free from all defects and faults. He is gracious towards his devotees. Śiva is adored by Śrikanṭha as being of the nature of self substance. Śiva is the cause of creation, maintenance and dissolution of the world.

8. Śrīpati

Śrīpati of the latter half of the 14th century A.D., wrote his commentary on B.S. called Śrīkara-bhāṣya. Śrīpati wrote it not in his own name but in the name of Śrīkara or Śivakara, for Śiva is said to have inspired him to write this work. So it is called Śrīkara-bhāṣya. His doctrine is called Bhedabhedātmaka. It is different from Pariṇāmavāda and Vivartavāda. His work is the philosophical basis of "Vīra-Saivism". According to him by meditating on Nīlakantha or Śiva, the Supreme, three-eyed, three-dimensional, and three-armed, one can achieve liberation.

21. "Aum namo'ham pādārthāya lokānām siddhihetave saccidānandarūpāya śivāya paramātmāne".

22. "Vīśabdam ya vikalpārthe raśabdo rahitārthakaḥ vikalparahitam saivāṁ vīraśaivam pracaksate"
Lord, the saint will attain Śiva - the Supreme Brahman.


Vallabha, the Śuddhādvaitin is a Vaiṣṇava commentator on B.S. His commentary is known as Anubhaśya. He is the follower of Viṣṇuswāmi, who is said to be the founder of Śuddhādvaita Viṣṇuswāmi wrote a commentary on B.S. called Sarvajña Sūkta.

Vallabha takes the word 'now' as introducing a new subject, and does not think a knowledge of Pūrvamīmāṃsā or the spiritual requisites of Śaṅkara as necessary pre-requisites for an inquiry into Brahman. He prescribes a combination of work and knowledge.

He also holds that Brahman has no origin. Brahman is essentially unmanifest but through worship and service it is possible to see It. According to him only existence is found; the other two qualities knowledge and bliss are neither manifest nor withdrawn.

The Soul - Its nature

The soul is eternal, and birth, growth, death etc. refer only to the body and not to the soul. There
is a view that the soul is merely intelligence and is, therefore, Brahman itself. The soul, however, is a knower, and it has knowledge as its essential attribute. The soul cannot change its nature and become one with Brahman. Brahman is the origin and also the place of dissolution of the world, and also It is both the efficient and the material cause of the world.

10. Śuka

Śuka, an advocate of Bhedavāda wrote a commentary on B.S. He admits that differences between Jīva and Īśwara and jīva and Prakṛti are real. According to him Brahman is in the form of Śri Hari, Kṛṣṇa or Nārāyaṇa. He believes in all the incarnations or avatāras which are all different form of the one and only Being.

According to him the purpose of jñāna or inquiry is for the attainment of release, mokṣalābha. The Supreme, out of his grace grants mokṣa or liberation. The released soul is Paratantra, subordinate to Paramātman. He enjoys bliss in association with the Supreme Lord.

23. B-S. I.1.2.
11. Vijñānabhiṣku

Vijñānabhiṣku, living in the beginning of the 17th century, wrote a commentary on the B.S., called Vijñānāmṛtabhaṣya. He attempts to reconcile the Vedānta and the Sāṁkhya systems. According to him there are two forms of the Supreme reality - Brahman and Iśwara. Brahman is pure Consciousness. Iśwara possesses energies constituting Prakṛti and Puruṣa which have no existence apart from God. For him Bhagavān or the Absolute is different from Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu. The jīvas are not unreal. While the individual souls and Brahman are distinguishable in character, the reality of the individual soul is not denied.

12. Baladeva

Baladeva is said to have lived about the beginning of the 18th century A.D. He wrote a commentary on the B.S. It is called Govindabhāṣya, because he claimed that it was written at the command of Govinda.24

24. bhāṣyametad viracitam baladevenadhimatā
Śrī Govinda nideśena govindākhyam agāttataḥ"
For him Brahman is Krsna, Visnu and Hari.
The Lord is both the efficient and the material cause of the Universe. According to him Bhakti is the sole or direct cause of salvation. Dhyāna or meditation is one form of Bhakti.

13. Sadāśivabrahmendra

Sadāśivabrahmendra's commentary on the Brahma-sūtra is known as Brahmātattvaprakāśikā. He, who belonged to the first half of the 18th century A.D., was a true follower of Śaṅkara and his philosophy is Nirviśeṣa Advaita. Like Śaṅkara, Sadāśiva also considers Brahman as attributeless, immutable, pure intelligence etc. As in the Upaniṣads he calls Brahman Satyam (Reality), Jñānam (knowledge) and Anantam (Infinite). Sadāśiva asserts that the sole reality is the Absolute Brahman which, to the external world, appears as only phenomenally real. He identifies the essential self in man with Brahman and concludes that the undifferentiated Jñāna in the Real Brahman.

25. Tai.Up.II.i.

Though Brahman and the world are of different natures, yet they can be related as cause and effect. However, the world is not different from Brahman in the realized state. It is also affected as real in the Vyāvahārika state. The world is dominated by the law of causality. Brahman is the cause of the origination, sustenance and dissolution of the world. Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the world. Śruti declares the non-difference of the Brahman and the world. Sadasiva accepts this doctrine and says that, "All the effects are the creation of Brahman". Like Saṅkara he also has adopted the Vivarta doctrine.

Sadasiva argues that Īśwara, Jīva and the world are the qualitatively distinct manifestations of Brahman experienced through Māyā. He adds that it is the one Brahman without a second that enters the intellect and appears as the Jīva. But in reality, they are identical. The Brahman is the Universal Self and Jīva is the individual self. Following kathā Upaniṣad Sadasiva points

27. Ibid., II,iii.6.

out that jīva is unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval. Jīva is the Ātman limited by the adjuncts of the body, the sense organs, manas, buddhi, ahamkāra etc., Jīva is one, but appears as many owing to various limiting adjuncts. 29

Jīva is the partaker of mokṣa Sadāśiva recognizes jñāna as the direct means of release. Karma and Upāsana may help in the urge to know the Real. The knowledge of the Real will purify our mind and the destruction of ignorance will enable us to be one with the Real. The Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad declares that the liberated do not return to the world. 30 Sadāśiva concurs with it to say that the knower of Brahmān becomes the Brahmān itself. 31 Ignorance, according to Sadāśiva, can be removed only by wisdom, and therefore liberation is the direct result of wisdom. For him, tapas is an important means to self-realization. On the whole, he was a jñanavādin, and believed that jñāna, the real knowledge of the Self.

29. B.T.P., II.ii.6, I.ii.20.
would lead to liberation because nescience is the cause of bondage.

14. Pañcānatanatkaraṇabhaṭṭācārya

The Saktibāṣya written by Pañcānatanatkaraṇabhaṭṭācārya is still more recent among the commentaries on Brahmāsūtra. The work is not only a welcome addition to the vast literature of commentaries on the Brahmāsūtra from different view points like Advaita, Viśistādvaita, Dvaita etc., but is also a valuable work because it makes a unique effort to formulate Sākta philosophy on the basis of the Vedic texts, viz., the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavadgītā and the Brahmāsūtra.

Pañcānana is a distinguished Sanskrit scholar and writer of modern India. His commentary is a learned and methodical exposition of the Sūtras on the lines of the fundamental metaphysics of Saktavedānta evolved by the author himself. Hence the system of thought propounded by him is his own. But it bears similarity with some

32. Saktibāṣya - A commentary on the B.S., Parimal publications, Delhi, 110 007, 1984.
existing schools of Vedāntic thought.

Though Śaktibhasya resuscitates monism, it differs from the monistic doctrine of Śaṅkara. For instance, Pañcānana conceives Supreme Reality as eternal being, transcendent in nature and blissful in character. It is also called Mahāsakti, Mūlasakti, Parabrahman or Ātma. The principles of Pure Consciousness or Spirit, and of unconsciousness or matter, are technically known as Śiva or Puruṣa and Śakti or Prakṛti respectively.

Prakṛti, whether pure (śuddha-vidyā) or impure (Māyā), is subject to evolution. But Puruṣa is immutable. Jīva or Consciousness is in reality a reflection of the medium of buddhi. Buddha is the first evolute of Prakṛti of Śiva which is consciousness or Puruṣa.

Brahman or Self in its original unity is neither exclusively spiritual nor exclusively material in character. It is Cidācidātmaka. When there is freedom from ignorance, as also from the cycle of the mundane life
of joy and suffering, the Self can be realized. It is ignorance, which makes knowledge of Self limited. The Self is universal being. It is consciousness. When this knowledge gets rid of its limitations and becomes infinite, it is converted into *Brahmajñāna*. The origin of such a knowledge leads to the destruction of ignorance.

According to Paṇcānana, absence of action is the cause of freedom from birth and sorrow. For him, the Self is not merely cit, but also Cidātmaka, having the higher aspiration to attain the formless Brahma. Conception of Pure-Consciousness proceeds to Moksa. The realization of Brahma caused by the above contemplation ends in the realization of Self as infinite. This realization destroys the sense of limitedness in Jiva.

Among the above mentioned commentaries the *Sūtrabhaṣya* of Śrī Saṅkara is considered to be the most reliable authority for a correct understanding of the B.S.

Nārāyaṇa Pandita in his *Madhvavijayabhāvaprakāśikā*, a bibliography on Madhva has recorded the names
of twenty-one commentators on B.S. before the time of Madhva. They are the following:

1. Bhāratīvijaya
2. Saccidānanda
3. Brahmaghosa
4. Sadānanda
5. Udvartha
6. Vijaya
7. Rudrabhāṭṭa
8. Vāmana
9. Yādavaprakāśa
10. Rāmānuja
11. Bhartrprapañcā
12. Dramiḍa
13. Brahmadatta
14. Bhāskara
15. Piśāca
16. Vṛttikāra
17. Vijayabhāṭṭa
18. Viṣṇukṛṣṇa
19. Vedāndra
20. Madhavadāsa and
21. Saṅkara
There are also Sub commentaries or glosses on the commentaries on B.S.

Conclusion

All the above commentators from Śaṅkara to Pañcarāṇana have endeavoured to make their own contributions to the Vedānta Philosophy and have propounded separate schools of thought based on Brahmasūtra and other Vedic texts. Though they fall into two broad groups viz., the Vivartavādins and the Pariṇāmavādins, they all agree on the fundamental concept of Brahman. Apart from the different names like Śiva, Visnu, Kṛsna etc., attributed to Brahman, it is accepted beyond doubt that Brahman is superior and saccidānanda, and that it is the Real, the Consciousness and the infinite, aiding in the cause of the world appearance. But differences arise as regards the concepts of individual Self and the world, and the way to liberation. Śaṅkara in ancient days and Pañcarāṇana in recent years conceive of the Pure Self devoid of all impurities as the Ultimate Truth.
For them, Jīva is the phenomenal Self, a reflection of the medium of Buddhī, the nature of which is limitedness, and is subjected to joy and sorrow. On the other hand, Bhāskara maintains that the individual soul is non-different and different from Brahman, is atomic in size, and its qualities are subject to limiting adjuncts. For Rāmanuja, the individual Self is jñāna or Consciousness, and is unlimited of itself though with the power of expansion and contraction. The Soul, according to him, is atomic in size, and illuminates knowledge.

As regards the concept of world, Śaṅkara is of the view that it is an appearance due to ignorance. But for Rāmanuja and Madhva it is not so. It is a reality in the sense that it is the manifestation of Prakṛti or matter, one of the three kinds of acit passing through many stages as Rāmanuja observes, or is of the nature of an effect having an intelligent cause and a maker who is God, as Madhva argues. The world is an appearance, an illusion to Śaṅkara, while it is real and
phenomenal and is the product of evolution to Bhāskara and Madhva.

The way of liberation is also a matter of dispute among these philosophers. It ranges from jñāna, Bhakti, meditation and contemplation to karma or action. Some combine together in one or two ways, or sometimes in all ways. The Jñānakarmasamuccaya of Bhāskara includes knowledge, work, and meditation. Nimbārka equips the way with work, knowledge, devotion, meditation, surrender to God, and obedience to the spiritual preceptor. Bhakti means different things to different philosophers. It is the one prepared with karma and jñāna, according to Rāmānuja. But for Viśnūnabhikṣu, it is love. Madhva alone seems to stick to the path of karma or action without any desire other than the final fruit.

In the final analysis, it appears that these varying interpretations of the Vedānta have only made the hard harder. In spite of the sectarian beliefs that the plethora of these commentaries has brought forth, they
convince us of the truth that the *Brahmasūtra* to which all these opposing commentators pin their faith, is a well of knowledge the depth of which is still unfathomed.