

षड्दर्शनानि (SHADDARSHANAS)

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Transcribed by 229 Sheshagiri

Vedas are the ancient and most available texts in the world literature. Indian traditions believe that Vedas are Apourusheyas (not composed by human beings). They are called Srutis that which is heard. The verses of Vedas were heard great sages and the mantras were seen by the Rishis मन्त्रद्रष्टा (Mantradrashtha). They were preserved by oral tradition which continued father to son and guru to pupil without any break. The word Veda primarily means sacred knowledge and Siddhanta Koumudi gives 4 meanings namely

- 1) विद्यते सत्तां गृह्णाति वस्तु अनेन इति वेदः That is called Veda through which one realises the real nature of things;
- 2) विदन्त्योभिः धर्मब्रह्मणी क्रिया ज्ञानमयं ब्रह्म वा इति वेदः one gets the knowledge of religion or ultimate truth (Brahma);
- 3) विन्दते विचारयति धर्मब्रह्मक्रिया ज्ञानमयं ब्रह्म वेति वेदः religion and Brahma are thought about and
- 4) विन्दते स्वरूपं लभन्ते वस्तु अनेन इति वेदः one attains the ultimate truth.

But Apasthamba gives one more meaning by saying that मन्त्र ब्राह्मणयोर्वेद नामधेयम् mantras and Brahmanas together are called Veda.

Vedas are referred to as three Rik, Yajur and Sama as mentioned in the verse of Purusha Sukta. Later Vedavyasa recategorized into four Vedas – Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. These Vedas are further divided as Samhita (the Veda text), Brahman (the ritualistic commentary), Aranyaka (transition from ritual to philosophical thinking) and Upanishad (philosophical texts). There are 6 Vedangas – Siksha, Vyakarana, Chandas and Nirukta (aimed at protecting the Vedas originality from changes) Jyotish and Kalpa – essential to understand the Vedas. Further there are 4 Upavedas namely Ayur; Dhanur; Gandharva; Silpa (Sthapatya)

The 6 orthodox systems आस्तिक दर्शनानि of Indian Philosophy popularly known as ShadDarshanas are Sankhya and Yoga, Vaiseshika and Nyaya and Purvamimansa and Uttaramimansa (or Vedanta). These have been traditionally recognised as 3 pairs because of some affinity in thought though each flourished independently with individuality often attacking the others like friendly quarrels among brothers of a joint family). They were intended to help interpretation of Vedic Texts believed to be the revelation of God thus called Astika Darsanas. Despite differences in their doctrines and methods, one thing is common to all the orthodox systems namely that salvation is the sole end and aim of life with knowledge as the door leading to it. The sages(Sutrakaras) first codified the findings in each system as Sutras which later scholars have built up imposing superstructures with their commentaries called Bhashya, Vartika, Vrutti, Vyakhya, Tika etc., detailed below:

Darshana	Pravartaka	Authority	Main Siddhanta	Pramanas	Padarthas
Sankhya	Kapila	Sankhya	Satkaryavada/ Parinamavada	3	25
Yoga	Patanjali	Yoga	Satkaryavada/ Seswaravada	3	26
Nyaya (Tarka)	Goutama	Nyaya	Asatkaryavada /Pitarapakvada	4	16
Vaisesika	Kanada	Vaiseshika	Paramanuvada/	3	7

			Pilupakavada		
Purvamimansa	Jaimini	Mimansa	Apurvavada	6	-
Uttaramimansa (Vedanta)	Badarayana Vyasa	Brahma	Vivartavada Mayavada	6	2

In contrast to Astikadarsanas, Nastika systems नास्तिक दर्शनानि are like the Charvakas (Brihaspati/Charvaka), the Buddhists (Goutama Buddha) and the Jains (Rushabadeva/Mahaviraswamy), who do not believe in the authority and Vedas and existence of God.

- 1) **SANKHYA DARSANA –The Nontheistic Dualism** - The word Sankhya is derived from the word Sankhya meaning counting and thinking. The first work of Sankhya Sutra is traditionally attributed to Kapila but present earliest form available is Sankhya Karika of Iswara Krishna Sankhya system is one of the oldest systems of Indian Philosophy which can be noticed in the Vedas referred to in Rikveda “.....” (Ch X – 129 – 3). The Rik also hints at the Satkaryavada form and Satkaryavada of Sankhya. Rigveda also hints at the Prakruti and Purush in the context of the creation the world. Bhagavadgita mentions the Sankhya system and Manu in his first chapter of Manusmriti describes the creation of the world. There are 72 Karikas and few Karikas are detailed.

The 25 principles of the Sankhya System पञ्चविंशति तत्त्वानम् विचारः सांख्यम् Thinking refers to the basic tenets of knowledge of self and counting implies the 24 principles born out of nature (Prakruti).

पञ्च तत्व Elements of Nature	पृथ्वि (Earth)	जल(water)	अग्नि(Fire)	वायु(Air)	आकाश(Space)
पञ्च कर्मेन्द्रिय Organs of action	वाक्(Speech)	हस्त(Hands)	पाद(Legs)	उपस्य {Genetals}	पाय(Annus)
पञ्च ज्ञानेन्द्रिय Organs of knowledge	नाक्(Nose)	जिह्व(Tongue)	चक्षु(Eyes)	चर्म(Skin)	कर्ण(Ears)
पञ्च तन्मात्र	गन्ध	रस	रूप	स्पर्श	शब्द
अन्तःकरण Internal Organs	मन(Mind)	बुद्धिचित्त Memory/Intellect	अहहकार Ego	प्रकृति Nature	पुरुष

Prakruti is characterised by 3 gunas (the ropes) –Sattva, Rajas, and Tamasa – that bind the soul to the world (सू 12 – 16) . Sankhya, the dualistic philosophy acknowledges two aspects of reality, the unconscious principle (Prakruti) and consciousness (Purusha or the self). According to Sankhya philosophy, the universe is full of pain and misery दुःखत्रयाभिधातात्, (सू-1) namely Adhyatmikam, Adhibhoutikam and Adhidaivikam – which are recurring and difficult to eliminate. The pramanatrayam are Ptatyakshyam, Anumanam and Aptavachanam – द्रष्टमनुमानमाप्तवचनम् च सर्वप्रमाणसिद्धत्वात् त्रिविधम् (सू 4) . जन्ममरणकरणानाम् प्रतिनियमात्, अयुगपत्प्रवृत्तेश्च, पुरुषबहुत्वम् सिद्धम् त्रैगुण्यविपर्याच्च ।(सू 18) . Birth and death are inevitable and different to bodies at different times and hence Purushabahutvam exists. The existence of an effect in its material cause prior to its casual operation is Satkarya and this theory establishes Satkaryavada असदकरणात् उपादान ग्रहणात् सर्वसम्भवात्, शक्तस्य शक्यकरणात्कारणभावाश्च सत्कार्यम् (सू 9) .

2) **YOGA - Self Discipline for Self-Realisation**- The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root – yuj, means “to unite”. Yoga system provides methodology for linking individual consciousness with the supreme consciousness. Yoga system that is considered as one of the six systems of Vedic Philosophy is Patanjali Yoga Sutra, which is closely allied to Sankhya Philosophy. Maharshi Patanjali compiled Yoga Sutras mentioned in Vedas and other scriptures. The Yoga system attempts to explain the nature of mind, its modifications, impediments to growth, afflictions, and the method for attaining the biggest goal of life i.e., Kaivalya. Patanjali Yoga Sutras comprises of 4 divisions namely, i) Samadhi Pada (Concentration – Spiritual Uses), ii) Sadhana Pada (Concentration – Its Practices), iii) Vibhooti Pada (Results of Powers) and iv) Kaivalya Pada (Salvation). Few Sutras are summarised below.

- i) **Samadhi Yoga** - Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (Chitta) from various forms of disturbances (Vrutti). योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः (सू - 2). There are 5 classes of modifications – painful and not painful. वृत्तयः पञ्चतय्यः क्लिष्टा अक्लिष्टाः (सू - 5). These are right knowledge, indiscrimination, verbal delusion, sleep and memory. प्रमाणविपर्ययविकल्पानिद्रस्मृतयः. (सू 6). There is another Samadhi, which is attained through practice of cessation (non-attachment) of all mental activity to obtain liberation. विरामप्रत्याभ्यासपूर्वकं संस्कारशेषोऽन्यः (सू - 18). To others, this Samadhi comes through faith, energy, memory, concentration and discrimination or by devotion to Isvara. श्रद्धावीर्यस्मृतिसमाधिप्रज्ञापूर्वकं इतरेषाम् (सू - 20) ईश्वरप्रणिधानाद् वा (सू 23). There is yet another sort of concentration (meditation) on the heart that has given up all attachment to sense objects. वीतरागविषयं वा चित्तम् (सू 36).
- ii) **Sadhana Pada**—Mortification, study and surrendering fruits of work to God are called Kriya Yoga. तपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि क्रियायोगः (सू - 1). For the practice of Samadhi, one must minimise pain bearing obstructions namely – ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and clinging to life. अविद्यास्मतारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः क्लेशाः (सू - 3). By the practice of the different parts of Yoga, the impurities are destroyed, knowledge becomes effulgent. योगाद्गानुष्ठानादशुद्धिक्षये ज्ञानदीप्तिरा विवेकख्यातेः (सू - 28). Yama (Non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, and non-receiving gifts), Niyama (purification and contentment), Asana (firm and pleasant posture), Pranayama (controlling exhalation and inhalation) Pratyahara (control of organs), Dharana (becoming fit), Dhyana (unbroken flow of knowledge), Samadhi (meditation) are 8 limbs of Yoga. यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्यानसमाधयोष्टाव अङ्गानि (सू 29)
- iii) **Vibhooti Pada** – Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi when practiced about one object is Samyama त्रयम् एकत्र संयमः (सू 7). The flow of this control of the mind becomes steady by habit. तस्य प्रशान्तवाहिता संस्कारात् (सू 10). By making Samyama on the three sorts of changes comes the knowledge of past and future. परिणामत्रयस्यंयमादतीतानागतज्ञानम् (सू 16). Karma is of 2 kinds, soon to be fructified and late to be fructified. By making Samyama, the Yogis know the exact time of separation from their bodies. सोपक्रमं निरूपक्रमं च कर्म तत्संयमाद् अपरान्तज्ञानम्. (सू 23). By giving up these comes the destruction of the seed of evil, the Yogi attains Kaivalyam. तद्वैराग्यादपि दोषबीजक्षये कैवल्यम् (सू 51). By the similarity of purity between the Satva and the Purusha, comes Kaivalya. सत्त्वपुरुषयोः शुद्धिसाम्ये कैवल्यम् इति. (सू 56).

Kaivalya Pada- The actions (Karma) of the Yogi attained to the state of perfection (Nishkamakarma) will not bind him as he does not have desires or care for the result but for ordinary man, the works of 3 kind - (black) evil, white (good) and mixed bind him. कर्माशुक्लाकृष्णं योगिनः त्रिनिधम् इतरेषाम्. (सू 6). When the virtue come, then there is no fear of falling or nothing can drag the Yogi down ततः क्लेशकर्मनिवृत्तिः. (सू - 29). Then all these transformations of the qualities which change from species to species, cease for ever. ततः कृतार्थानां परिणामक्रमपरिसमाप्तिर्गुणानाम् (सू - 31).

3. **Nyaya – Tarka** –Nyaya Darshana is one of the most important Darshanas from ancient times. To understand the Vaidika Dharma, knowledge of is essential. Nyaya and Vaisesika treated as one (समानन्तराः). (Nyaya means correct thinking with proper arguments and valid reasoning and known as Tarka Sastra (The Science of reasoning). It is a system of logical realism. The purpose of Nyaya is critical examination of the objects of knowledge by means of cannons of logical proof and the desired meaning is brought out clearly. नीयते विवर्तितोऽर्थः न्याय. Nyaya Darshana develops the power of reasoning and arguing. The word Nyaya signifies investigating analysis and opposed to Samkhya synthesis. Nyaya Sutra by Maharshi Aashaadha Gautama is the primary text of Nyaya Darshana and spread over 5 chapters and subdivided into 2 with total number of Sutras varied from 523 to 532 with different authorities. There are 12 Bhashyas (commentaries) written on Nyaya Sastra. For example, Gautama's Panchadhyayi, Vatsayana's Nyaya Bhashya, Nyayavartika Commentary on Bhashya by Bharadwaj Udyotakara, Nyayavartikatatpatparyatika by Vachaspati Mishra, Tatparyaparisudhi by Udayanacharya, etc., Kesava Mishra's (13th Century) Tarka Bhasha – Nyaya emphasis and Annam Bhatta's (17th Century) Tarka Sangraha – Vaisesika emphasis are important to mention and best-known syncretic introductions to Navanyaya (Neo logic).

Nyaya Philosophy recognized 16 categories of padarthas (Vishaya) meaning is that by a correct and true understanding, one gets liberated from this world of birth and death. They are i) प्रमाण – Means or instruments of valid knowledge; ii) प्रमेय – Objects of valid knowledge or cognition; iii) संशय – Doubt; iv) प्रयोजन – Purpose or motive; v) दृष्टान्त- Example; vi) सिद्धान्त - Established conclusion; vii) अवयव - Members of syllogism; viii) तर्क – Reduction and absurdism, ix) निर्णय – Decisive knowledge; x) वाद -Discussion; xi) जल्प – Argument; xii) वितण्ड – Mere destructive argument; xiii) हेत्वाभास Fallacies in reasoning; xiv) छस – spacious argument; xv) जाति - Futile objection; xvi) निग्रहस्थान - Clincher .

(1) **प्रमेय** – The instruments of valid cognition are 12 in number namely 1) आत्मन् – Self or Soul; 2) शरीर – Body; 3) इन्द्रिय – Sense organ, 4) अर्थ – Objects; 5) बुद्धि – Knowledge; 6)

मनः Mind; 7) प्रवृत्ति – Action; 8) दोष – Defect; 9) प्रत्येभाव – Re-birth; 10) फल – Result;

11) दुःख – Misery; 12) अपवर्ग – Salvation. (2) **प्रमाण** – The Pramana or the means of

right knowledge is 1) प्रत्यक्षच – Perception; 2) Inference – अनुमान; 3) Comparison; उपमान.

4) Word or verbal – शब्द. Further there are 2 types of perception that is Ordinary perception

– लौकिक and extra-ordinary perception अलौकिक.

4. **Vaisesika -Vedic Atomic Theory**– The founder of Vaisesika Philosophy is the sage Kanada, who was also known as Uluka. Therefore, this system is sometimes called aulukya. Kanada wrote Vaisesika Sutra, and this work is divided into 10 cantos, each canto containing two sections. The significant feature of this system is the introduction of a special category of reality called uniqueness (visesha) known as Vaisesika. Vaisesika is also allied to the nyaya system of philosophy. Both systems accept the liberation of the individual self as the end of goal, both view ignorance as the root cause of pain and misery and both believe that liberation is attained only through right knowledge or reality. The 2 major differences between nyaya and vaisesika, first nyaya philosophy accepts 4 independent sources of knowledge – perception, inference, comparison, and testimony but vaisesika accepts only 2 – perception and inference. Second nyaya maintains that all of reality is comprehended by 16 categories (padarthas), whereas vaisesika recognises only 7 categories of reality. These are: dravya- (substance), guna -(quality), karma (action), samanya (generality), visesha (uniqueness), samavaya (inherence) and abhava (nonexistence). Of the above, six are exist and last one is nonexistence.

Vaisesika's 7 Categories (Padarthas) of Reality –

According to Vaisesika school, all things that exist, can be cognized, and named are Padarthas, the objects of experience which were classed into 6, but later Vaisesikas (Shridhara & Udanaya and Sivaditya) added one more category Abhava (non-existence). The first 3 categories are defined as artha (which can be perceived) and they have real objective existence. The later 3 categories are defined as budhyapeksan (product of intellectual discrimination) and they are logical categorisation. Dravya, substance, is that in which a quality or an action can exist but which is different from both quality and action. Without substance, there cannot be a quality or an action because substance is the substratum of quality and action, and it is also the material cause of the composite things produced from it. A cloth, for example, is formed by the combination of several threads of certain colours. The threads are the material or constitute causes of the cloth because it is made of the threads that subsist in the cloth.

- i) **Dravya (Substance)** - There are 9 Dravyas namely पृथिवी (Earth), अप् (Water), तेजस् (Fire), वायु (Air), आकास (Space or ether), काल (Time), दिक् (Direction), आत्म (Self or Soul), मनस् (Mind). The first 5 of these are called भूत (physical elements) the substances having specific qualities so that they could be perceived by one or other external senses. For example, smell is the particular property' of the earth and it is apprehended by the nostrils.

Paramanu – The smallest particle of matter - earth, water, fire, and air- called paramanu or atom in vaisesika refers to the most minute indivisible state of matter, which cannot be produced or destroyed as they are eternal. This should not be confused with the modern scientific term atom because an atom as described in nuclear physics is itself composed of many parts. Therefore, that indivisible and minute part in Vaisesika is called the atom.

Akasa – ether. There are 4 kinds of atoms – atoms of earth, atoms of water,

atoms of fire and atoms of air – each having own peculiar qualities. Akasa, the 5th substance is the substratum of the quality of sound, it is not made up of atoms. Akasa is translated as space. Sound can be perceived, but Akasa cannot be perceived because it lacks 2 conditions necessary for the perception of an object – perceptible dimension and manifest colour. Akasa is unlimited (Does not have dimension) and formless (colourless). Akasa is one and eternal because it is not made up of parts and does not depend on any other substance for its existence. It is all pervading in the sense that it has an unlimited dimension and that its quality (sound) is perceived everywhere.

Direction and time – Direction and time are also imperceptible substances, and they are single, eternal and all pervading. Direction is inferred on the basis such as here, there, near, far etc. and time is inferred from the concepts now, today, tomorrow, past, present, etc. When all pervading, indivisible space is limited by the walls of a jar, that space is known as the space of the jar (Ghatakasa).

In the same way, direction and time are also thought of as multiple because of the notions of variety and specificity expressed as east, west, one hour, two hours and so on.

Soul – The 8th kind of substance, the soul or atman, is also considered to be eternal and all pervading and is the substratum of the phenomenon of consciousness. According to Vaisheshika philosophy, there are 2 kinds of souls: individual and Supreme. Individual souls are known as Jivatman, and the Supreme soul is known as Paramatman or Iswara. The Supreme soul is inferred to be the creator of the world.

Mind – Mind is considered as the 9th kind of substance. It is the eternal in the sense faculty of the individual soul and the soul's qualities such as pleasure and pain. Like the soul, mind is atomic and indivisible – there is one in each body. The existence of the Mind is not perceived but is inferred. Mind is a partless, atomic and internal sense faculty of perception.

ii) **Guna (Quality)** – The Vaisheshika Sutras mention 17 Gunas (Qualities) to which Prasastapada added another 7. Gunas cannot exist while a substance is capable of existing independently by itself. The 24 Gunas are

रूप (Colour)	रस (Taste)	गन्ध (Smell)	स्पर्श (Touch)	सङ्ख्य (Number)
परिमाण Size)	प्रथक्त्व (Individuality)	संयोग (Conjunction)	विभाग (Disjunction)	परत्व (Priority)
अपरत्व (Posterity)	बुद्धि (Knowledge)	सुख (Pleasure)	दुःख (Pain)	इच्छा (Desire)
द्वेष (Aversion)	प्रयत्न (Effort)			
To these Prasastapada added				
गुरुत्व (Heaviness)	द्रवत्व (Liquidity)	स्नेह (Viscosity)	धर्म (Merit)	अधर्म (Demerit)

शब्द (Sound)	संस्कार (Faculty)			
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- iii) **Karma - Activity**– Karmas (activities) like Gunas (Qualities) have no separate existences. While quality is a permanent feature of a substance an activity of a transient one. Akasa (Ether), Kala (Time), Dik (Space) and Atman (Self) though substances, are devoid of Karma (activity).
- iv) **Samanya – Generality** – Since there are plurality of substances, there will be a relation among them. When a property is found common to many substances, it is called Samanya.
- v) **Visesa – Particularity** - By means of Visesa, one can perceive substances as different from another. As the ultimate atoms are innumerable, so are the Visesas.
- vi) **Samanya – Inherence** – Kanada defined Samanya as the relations between the cause and effect. Prasatapada defined it as the relationship existing between the substance that are inseparable, standing to one another in the relation of the container and the contained. The relation of Samavaya is not perceivable but only inferable from the inseparable connection of the substance.
- vii) **Abhava – Non-Existence**- Abhava, the 7th and last category of reality is negative in contrast to the first 6 categories., which are positive. According to Visesika philosophy, non-existence exists, just as space and direction do. Therefore, non-existence also exists. There are 2 kinds of non-existence: absence of something in something else (Samsaragabhava)). Forexample,when a jar is broken into pieces then there is non-existence of that jar. The non-existence of the jar begins with its destruction, but this non-existence cannot be ended in any way, because the same jar can be brought back into existence, while mutual non-existence (anyonyabhava) is the difference of one thing from another. When one thing is different from another, they mutually exclude each other and there is the non-existence of as the other. For example, a pen is different from a book, so there is non-existence of the book in the pen and of the pen in the book.

5) **Purva Mimamsa**– Mimamsa is a Sanskrit work meaning reflection or critical investigation and refer to tradition of contemplation which reflect on the meaning of certain Vedic texts. This philosophy professes to investigate the truth embodied in the Brahmanas which precede the Upanishads. Mimamsakas believed in rituals and activity rather than in intellectualism and laid emphasis on धर्म – Social and religion duty. The aims of Mimamsa are to give rules for the interpretation of the Vedas, the earlier scriptures of Hinduism and to provide a philosophical justification for the observance of Vedic Rituals. Mimamsa is divided into 2 systems based on two-fold division of the Vedas (Karma Kanda dealing with sacrifices and Jnyana Kanda dealing with spiritual knowledge); both use the same logical method of handling their problems; both use the same literary form; by each has its own limited sphere of interpretations. Mimamsa that deals with the initial part of Vedas is called Purva Mimamsa. Purva Mimamsa is also known as Dharma

Mimamsa and Karma Mimamsa. These are generally referred to as simply Mimamsa and Vedanta respectively.

Mimamsa Sutra or Purva Mimamsa Sutras written by Rishi Jaimini is one of the most important ancient Hindu Philosophical texts. It forms the basis of Mimamsa, the earliest of the 6 orthodox schools (Darsanas). Sage Jaimini was one of the disciples of Sage Veda Vyasa, author of Mahabharata. The major commentaries on all 12 chapters text of the Mimamsa Sutra (further divided into 60 Padas) of Jaimini were written by KumarilaBhatta and Prabhakara Bhatta as Sabari Bashya). In the 1st chapter, important collections of words which have various meanings is discussed, such as Injunctions (विधि), explanatory passages (अर्थवाद), hymn (मन्त्र), and tradition (स्मृति)_etc., In the 2nd chapter, discussions relating to the difference of various rites, refutation of erroneously proofs are held.. In the 3rd chapter Sruti, sence of the passage (लिङ्ग), context (वाक्य) and their respective weight when in apparent opposition to one another, the ceremonies called Pratipatti-karmdni, things mentioned incidentally (Anarabhyadhita) and the duties of the sacrifices are expounded. In the 4th chapter, the influence on other rites of the principal and subordinate rites the fruit caused by the juhu anddice playing which forms a subordinate part of the rajasuiya sacrifice are explained. 5th chapter discusses relative order of various passages of sruti, different parts of sacrifice, etc., In the 6th chapter, the persons qualified to offer sacrifices, their obligations, the substitutes for materials used in sacrifices, expiatory riles and the different sacrificial fires are made clear. In the 7th and 8th chapters, transference of ceremonies and virtues of sacrifices are discussed. In the 9th chapter, adaptation of hymns when quoted in a new context (Uha) and melodies (Samans) and mantras are discussed. In the 10th chapter, the discussion revolves around the non-performance of the primary rites and dependent rites, offerings to grahas, etc., In the 11th chapter, there is discussion on Tantra (combining several acts one), and avapa (performance of an act more than once). In the last 12th chapter, prasanga, tantra and cumulation of concurrent rites (samuchchaya) is explained.

6)Uttara Mimamsa – Vedanta Sara - Vedanta Sara is one of the best-known epitomes text book (प्रकरणग्रन्थ) of the philosophy of the Upanishads, as taught by Shankaracharya, whose followers are said to number the last in India. Vedanta Sara is the essence of Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and various commentaries on these texts and the Bhagavad-Gita. Sri Sadananda Yogindra Saraswati, or familiarly known, Sadananda, the author belongs to one of the 10 distinguished orders of sanyasins (monks) of Sankara school.Vedanta Sarais a 15th century Advaita Vedanta text, presented in the Upanishads to suit different levels of understanding and different temperamental attitudes amongst seekers of Truth. The doctrine of Avidya (Ignorance of Jiva) or Maya, its aspects, such as materialism, Atomism, Realism, and Idealism are dealt with. The knowledge of Brahman sought with the help of श्रुति Shrutu (Revelation) and Yoga, a Guru or an enlightened each is an indispensable necessity. Just like the दृक्-द्रव्य-विवेक the Vedanta Sara adds Samadhi to the triad of sravana (hearing), मनन (reflection) and निदिध्यासन (repeated meditation). The Vedanta Sara is divided into 6 chapters and contains 227 verses.

Chapter 1 has 31 verses dealing with preliminaries that begin with an introductory prayer and thereafter discusses the subject matter of Vedanta, the qualifications for the study of Vedanta and the necessity of a Guru. नित्य (Daily), नैमित्तिक(Occasional) and प्रायश्चित्त(Purifying) works purify mind, उपासना and not karmas, the former lead to पितृलोक the latter to the सत्यलोक. Chapter 2 has 90 verses dealing with आध्याय, i.e., Superimposition of the unreal on the real due to ignorance, individual and collective aspects, the nature of तुरीय, the experience of pure consciousness, the extensions of ignorance (अविद्य), the nature of the subtle bodies (सूक्ष्म शरीर), the nature of Gross bodies स्थूलशरीर), and the Limit of Superimposition. Chapter 3 has 15 verses and discusses the जीव and Superimposition of the true nature of the self (ब्रह्म) and in that context discusses the views of the Charvakas, of the Buddhists, of the Mimamsakas and the Sunyavadins, the followers of Nagarjuna. The 4th Chapter has 44 verses dealing with De-superimposition, thou are that (तत्त्वमसि) and I am

Brahman (अहम्ब्रह्म). Truth does not become known till it is made to reveal itself. Chapter 5 has 35 verses and prescribes the steps to self-realisation, lays emphasis on the Study of Vedantic texts, explains Reflection and Meditation, Samadhi and its nature and varieties, Samadhi and sleep, obstacles to Samadhi and their Removal. Chapter 6th has 12 verses which deal with the जीवन्मुक्त (Liberated being), the characteristics of the जीवन्मुक्त and the Attainment of कैवल्य or Absoluteness.