

Poorvottara Mimamsayoh Aikasastryam

The issue of the Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa together constituting a single Shâstra (philosophical science):

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Indian Philosophy is basically divided into two main categories, viz. the Orthodox and the heterodox systems. The Orthodox systems of Indian Philosophy are mainly six systems. They are as follows:

1. Nyâya
2. Vaisheshika
3. Sâmkhya
4. Yoga
5. Purva Mimâmsa
6. Uttara Mimâmsa (Vedânta).

While it is acceptable to all that the first two systems (viz. Nyâya and Vaisheshika) together constitute a single Shâstra (stream of learning, in this case) called Tarka Shâstra and the second two systems (viz. Sâmkhya and Yoga) too together constitute a single Shâstra (stream of learning, in this case) called Sâmkhya Shâstra, there is some difference of opinion among the scholars belonging to the Advaita and Vishishtâdvaita schools about the final two systems (viz. Purva Mimâmsa and Uttara Mimâmsa) together constituting a single Shâstra (stream of learning, in this case) called Mimâmsa Shâstra. Sri Ramanujâchârya, the founder of the philosophy of Visistadwaita advocated that these two systems too constitute a single Shâstra, while Sri Shankarâchârya as well as Mâdhvâcharya differs in this regard.

The main points of argument for Sri Sankaracharya and Sri Madhvacharya are as follows:

1. The Purva Mimâmsa deals at length on the Karma aspect while the Uttara Mimâmsa deals with the aspect of the Supreme Brahman. Since the topics of discussion are entirely different in the two systems, they cannot be part of the same Shâstra.

2. While Sri Jaimini is considered the author of Purva Mimâmsa, Sri Bâdarâyana or Vyâsa is proclaimed the author of Uttara Mimâmsa. Sine they are authored by two different authors, they cannot be said to constitute a single Shâstra.
3. In the very first Sutra of the Vedânta Sutra “*Athato Brahma jijnâsa*”, the word “*Atha*” which means “afterwards” actually means: “After obtaining the four pre-requisites viz.
 - a. The wisdom of the aspect of beings that are eternal and non-eternal (*nitya-Aaitya; vastu-viveka*)
 - b. The qualities or the means like internal control over the organs (*sama*), external control over the sense organs (*dama*) and so on.
 - c. Renunciation of the wish to enjoy luxuries both in this world and the world yonder, and finally,
 - d. The wish to attain emancipation.

Since there is no chance to even think about Karma in this context, the two Darshana cannot constitute a single subject.

4. Apart from these aspects, there are quite a few differences in the different theories accepted in the Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa. The Purva Mimâmsa accepts that only those Vedic injunctions that ordain a person to do something or prohibit a person from doing something are to be considered authentic and correct. Other Vedic injunctions conveying some other implied meanings are to be considered as not as authentic. The Uttara Mimâmsa accepts that all the Vedic injunctions, irrespective of whether they ordain something or not are totally authentic and are to be respected. Thus since the theories with regard to many aspects are different in the two systems of philosophy, they cannot be said to form two parts of the same subjects.

These are the general reasons that are given by the scholars to support the theory that Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa do not together form a single Shâstra.

Sri Râmânuja however argues that the two darshana form a single Shâstra:

1. Both the Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa are meant, and are inarguably accepted, that they are meant to interpret the entire gamut of Vedic literature, and give their correct meaning. Since the work that is to be commented upon (the entire gamut of the Vedas) is a single topic as such, the commentary of this single work too, even if given under two different names can only be considered as a single subject. Hence the Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa together form a single Shâstra.
2. The names viz. Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa (meaning previous Mimâmsa and the final Mimâmsa) themselves suggest that they are two different parts of one and the same.
3. Even though the two works of Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa may have been authored by different authors, they cannot be construed as totally different subjects, since it is only the subject matter that is instrumental in determining the subject being identical or different, and not the number of authors who have authored the literature.
4. In the very beginning of the Vedânta Sutra, the first aphorism viz. "*Athato Brahma jijnâsa*", the word "*Atha*" means "afterwards". Here, the meaning is to be understood as "After studying the Purva Mimâmsa". The significance of interpreting the word "afterwards" in such a manner can be appreciated when we study the background and context in which this has been mentioned. As such, the Vedas ordain that every Brahmin should, irrespective of anything and without any reason, study and know (by heart) the complete original text of the Vedas, together with their limbs or parts known as the "*anga*". Once he is familiar with the texts, he will automatically try to understand the meaning of those texts. Since different Yagna-s or sacrifices have been prescribed to be performed for the sake of attaining different worldly fruits like money, prosperity and so on, the person engages in these acts of performing different sacrifices. However,

in due course he realizes the following fact: these sacrifices, which no doubt yield good fruits; nevertheless, are but temporary; they are not ever-lasting; not only that, there are better fruits that are attainable. Having realized this, he automatically comes to see the Upanishadic part of the Vedas, and eventually comes to study their interpretation viz. the Uttara Mimâmsa or the Brahma Mimâmsa, wherein it has been mentioned that one can attain everlasting and most exalted fruits (that are unsurpassed by anything else) by attaining the knowledge of the Supreme Brahman. This is the procedure of studying the Brahma Mimâmsa. Therefore, it is in the fitness of things that the word “*atha*” means “after the study of the Purva Mimâmsa”. In this case, it is but natural that the Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa are two parts of a single subject. The method of interpreting the word “*Atha*” in any other manner is not in accordance with the context and is against the general principles of interpretation.

5. There are many great sages like Bodhâyana, Upavarsha and others that have commented on both the Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa, considering them as a single subject.
6. The argument that “there are quite a few differences in the different theories accepted in the Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa, and hence they are two different topics” does not hold good. It is fully accepted that there is an exception to every rule. While certain rules are mentioned in the Purva Mimâmsa, the exceptions to the same are mentioned in the Uttara Mimâmsa. Mentioning an exception to a general rule does not mean that it is a contradiction to the original rule.
7. Apart from these, there are many other points that are supportive of the actual fact that the Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa together constitute a single Shâstra.

Thus, Sri Râmânuja, citing all the above reasons, successfully and correctly counters all the arguments proffered by the scholars belonging to other schools of thought and concludes that Purva Mimâmsa and the Uttara Mimâmsa together constitute a single Shâstra.