

Shankara Vedanta Custom GPT

(Update 05-2026)

New Samples

Default: GPT 5.5 Thinking (Standard)

Prompt A: Is anvaya-vyatireka the same as adhyaropa-apavada?

1. Pure Shankara position

No. Anvaya–vyatireka is not the same as adhyāropa–apavāda.

They are closely related, but they function at different levels.

Adhyāropa–apavāda is the **comprehensive Upanishadic teaching method**: first a provisional standpoint is superimposed for instruction, then it is rescinded so that the non-dual Self alone remains.

Anvaya–vyatireka is a **reasoning or discriminative aid** within that teaching: what persists is traced as Self; what comes and goes is excluded as non-Self.

Satchidanandendra states this very directly: the Upanishads reveal the self-established Reality through **adhyāropāpavāda**, and use **anvaya–vyatireka** only as reasoning that follows experience, subsidiary to that method.

2. Textual basis

Suresvara’s *Naishkarmyasiddhi* uses anvaya–vyatireka to purify the meaning of “**thou**” in “That thou art.” The seeker gives up the sphere of “you” — the objectifiable non-Self — through agreement and difference; then śruti compassionately teaches “That thou art.”

Another passage explains its concrete operation: the body, objects, and changing mental states are subject to exclusion, while the seer or witness persists. But this discrimination remains preparatory; the final removal of ignorance comes from the Vedantic sentence, not from inference alone.

Satchidanandendra’s Gaudapāda exposition also warns that Advaita is not established merely by **anvaya–vyatireka-anumāna**. Reasoning is acceptable only when subordinate to immediate experience and śruti; mere logic is not the Vedantic pramāṇa for Brahman.

3. Interpretive analysis

A simple way to put it:

Anvaya–vyatireka asks:

“What is constant, and what is inconstant?”

Adhyāropa–apavāda asks:

“What has been provisionally assumed for teaching, and what must finally be withdrawn?”

For example, in dṛg–dr̥śya viveka:

First, the Self is treated as the **seer** and the body-mind-world as **seen**. Anvaya–vyatireka helps here: the seen changes; the seer persists.

But from the final standpoint, even “seerhood” is not the true nature of Ātman. To call Ātman a seer still leaves a subtle subject-object duality. Therefore, adhyāropa–apavāda rescinds even that provisional seerhood.

So anvaya–vyatireka can take you from “I am the body-mind” to “I am the witness.” But adhyāropa–apavāda must remove even the notion “I am a witness opposed to witnessed objects.”

4. Later-school differences

Some presentations make anvaya–vyatireka almost the central proof of Advaita. From the Pure Shankara–Satchidanandendra standpoint, that overstates its role. It is not an independent inferential proof of Brahman. It is a **Vedantic aid**, useful only when governed by śruti and culminating in immediate recognition.

This is why Suresvara rejects the idea that merely separating Self and non-Self by anvaya–vyatireka makes “That thou art” redundant. Even the knowledge of distinction, and even the absence of distinction in the witness, must be finally relinquished through the Vedantic sentence.

5. Conclusion with certainty level

Supported by Tier 1 and clarified by Tier 2; Satchidanandendra Saraswati’s interpretation of Shankara.

Anvaya–vyatireka is not identical with adhyāropa–apavāda. It is a subordinate reasoning-process used within the larger Upanishadic method.

In one sentence:

Anvaya–vyatireka discriminates the constant Self from the inconstant non-Self; adhyāropa–apavāda first permits such provisional distinctions and then rescinds even them in non-dual Self-knowledge.

Prompt B: In Bhashya, where is Maya described?

1. Pure Shankara position

In Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyas, **māyā** is described mainly in relation to **Īśvara**, creation, name-and-form, and empirical appearance. The most important places are:

1. **Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya 1.4.3**

Māyā is described as the **avyakta**, the unmanifest seed-power:

avidyātmikā bījaśaktiḥ, called avyakta, resting on Parameśvara, and indicated in śruti by “māyāṃ tu prakṛtiṃ vidyāt.” It is said to be māyā because it cannot be determined as either identical with or different from Brahman.

2. **Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya 2.1.14**

This is one of the clearest definitions. Śaṅkara says that **name and form**, imagined by avidyā, as though belonging to the omniscient Lord, indescribable as identical with or different from Him, and forming the seed of saṃsāra, are called in śruti and smṛti:

māyā, śakti, prakṛti.

3. **Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya 2.1.27**

Māyā is explained through **nāma-rūpa**: Brahman becomes the basis of empirical dealings such as transformation only through name-and-form imagined by avidyā; in its absolute nature Brahman remains untouched and untransformed.

4. **Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya 2.1.9**

Śaṅkara uses the magician analogy: just as a magician is not touched by the māyā projected by himself, because it is not substantial, so the Paramātmā is not touched by the māyā of saṃsāra.

5. **Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya 4.6**

On “ātma-māyayā,” Śaṅkara says the Lord appears to take birth by His own māyā, not really like an ordinary embodied being. Prakṛti here is called **the Māyā of Viṣṇu consisting of the three guṇas**, by which the world is deluded.

6. **Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya 7.14**

Śaṅkara says the Lord's māyā is **guṇamayī**, difficult to cross, and deludes all beings; those who take refuge in the Lord as the master of māyā and their own Self cross it.

7. **Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya 9.10**

Śaṅkara glosses the Lord's māyā as **triguṇātmikā, avidyālakṣaṇā**, the productive principle through which the moving and unmoving world is brought forth under the Lord's witnessing presence.

8. **Bṛhadāraṇyaka Bhāṣya 2.5.19**

On “Indra appears manifold through māyās,” Śaṅkara explains the multiplicity as through māyā-like prajñās or through false identifications connected with name and form, not as a real plurality in the one consciousness.

2. Important caution

In Pure Śaṅkara Vedānta, **māyā should not be automatically equated with the later scholastic doctrine of a positive, objective mūlāvidyā-substance**. Satchidanandendra emphasizes that later sub-commentaries often identify nāma-rūpa, avyakta, avidyā, māyā, prakṛti, and other terms as synonyms of one objective avidyā, but this is not Śaṅkara's own primary usage. Śaṅkara's bhāṣya says māyā or avyakṛta is **avidyā-kalpita**—imagined through avidyā—not an independent real stuff clinging to Ātman.

3. Conclusion

The key Bhāṣya locations are:

BSBh 1.4.3, 2.1.14, 2.1.27, 2.1.9; Gītā Bhāṣya 4.6, 7.14, 9.10; Bṛhadāraṇyaka Bhāṣya 2.5.19.

Certainty level: Strongly established from Tier 1, with Satchidanandendra's clarification of Śaṅkara's intended usage.