

FOREWORD

My friend Dr. K.C.Varadachari asked me to write a foreword to his book “Rāmānuja’s Theory of Knowledge.” I gladly comply with his request on account of my interest in the subject and my desire to express my appreciation of the scholarly contribution made by the author to the Philosophy of Rāmānuja.

Dr. Varadachari rightly begins his study with the thesis that Rāmānuja is a synthetic thinker who reconciles all conflicts in the pr and seeks to do justice to the facts of physical, moral and spiritual experience. He expounds Rāmānuja’s theory of knowledge in a succinct way by repudiating all rival theories and removes the misconception that Viśiṣṭādvaita is qualified monism. Realism and Idealism are only partial views and their defects are removed by the Organic theory of Rāmānuja. In the sections dealing with Perception he clearly brings out the truth that the physical object and an undifferented consciousness is unthinkable. The Veda is free from all defects as it deals with eternal truths intuited by the Rsis and forms a single organic unity. Consciousness is an attribute or function of a subject or self and every cognition is of a real thing and even appearances are real. There are degrees of perfection and not degrees of reality. The theory of aprathaksiddhaviśeṣaṇa is an eternal and intrinsic relation and not external and it is misleading to say that Rāmānuja’s theory is an adjectival theory of the Absolute.

Epistemology is based on Ontology and the central concept used by Rāmānuja to explain it is Śarīra-Sarīri-Bhāva or the relation of body and soul which is called by the author organistic and personalistic. It harmonises the physical, moral and spiritual orders of Reality. The physical order is ever changing and it serves as the common field of all our activity. The selves undergo changes only in their consciousness and not in their nature. The unifying principle is the indwelling presence or Person that is the source, controller and goal of all beings. Thus physics is related to metaphysics and metaphysics has its basis in religion. The self is not God, but belongs to God who is the supreme Subject of Knowledge and the Object of love. In *Mukti*, the self regains its universal knowledge and attains fullness and freedom.

Dr. Varadachari has thus clearly brought out the central truths of Epistemology of Viśiṣṭādvaita and shown its integral relation to metaphysics and religion, and it is fervently hoped that the author will soon publish the other aspects of Viśiṣṭādvaita and complete the work which he has so well begun.

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