PREFACE

The object of the present thesis is a comparative and critical study of some of the fundamental metaphysical problems discussed in the philosophy of Rāmānuja, the Pāñcarātra school and the Ālvars. Since the philosophy of Rāmānuja is developed in direct opposition to, and by way of criticism of, the Advaita philosophy, and since the Pāñcarātra philosophy is in many respects similar to that of the Advaita, the latter has also been taken into consideration.

The main idea that has prompted this study is an examination of the view held by many scholars that the philosophy of Rāmānuja is a direct outcome of his conscious effort to blend the Vedāntic metaphysics with the Vaiṣṇavite religion of the Pāñcarātra school and the Ālvars. The other aim of this work is to show that Rāmānuja's teachings are based on the Vedic scriptures, and that his organicistic interpretation of the Vedānta philosophy offers a bold, and in no way less important, contrast to the absolutistic interpretation of Śṅkaṭa and his followers.

To my knowledge this is the first work of its kind which aims at a comparative and critical study of the philosophy of Rāmānuja, the Advaita school, the Pāñcarātra school and the Ālvars along the lines of treatment here followed.

As regards the philosophy of Rāmānuja the results of my comparative study have shown that it does not seem to have been influenced by the Pāñcarātra school and the Ālvars. Though this position may appear startling and unpalatable to many writers on, and the followers of the Viśiṣṭādvaita and Śri Vaiṣṇavism, I cannot help maintaining it, as it is the logical
out come of the glaring contradictions that prevail between the views of Rāmānuja on the one hand and the Pāñcarātra school and the Ālvārs on the other. I have also ventured to call into question and to repudiate the ascription of a number of Pāñcarātra doctrines to Rāmānuja. This misunderstanding seems to be due to a failure to dissociate the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja from the Viśiṣṭādvaita of his followers.

Further I have tried to show that the philosophy of Rāmānuja is entirely based on the Prasthānā-ṭrayi and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and that his organicistic standpoint is more satisfactory than the standpoint of the Advaita school. In order to do so I have undertaken an exhaustive comparative and critical survey of the two philosophies. Though throughout the work my sympathy has been with the general drift of Rāmānuja's philosophy, I have not refrained myself from putting fingers on its weak points, specially its crude anthropomorphism.

So far as the exposition of the philosophy of the Pāñcarātra school is concerned, I believe, mine is the first attempt to give its complete account. The singular work so far written by F. Otto Schrader is mostly confined to the historical and the cosmological aspects of the Samhitā thought. He has not dealt with the Nārāyaṇiya account of the Pāñcarātra thought. Further, my exposition differs fundamentally from that of Schrader. He has maintained non-advaitism as the teaching of the Samhitās, but my findings have led me to establish Advaitism as the view towards which the Samhitās incline.

It is my first and foremost duty to express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. A.G. Javadekar, who inspite of his multifarious activities, supervised this work. But for his
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