

INTRODUCTION

In my earlier work on the Metaphysics of *Sri Rāmānuja's Śrī Bhāṣya* I dealt among other topics with the nature of the soul and incidentally with the nature of Consciousness. The soul is a sentience-point or an intelligence that is utterly finite, that is capable of being aware of itself without the mediation or functional activity of its consciousness, as is seen to be the case in states other than the waking and the dreaming. The soul's consciousness is inevitably used when it knows objects other than its own soul-nature. This is true even in relation to the soul knowing its own body. This indeed is the reason for considering the body to be other than the soul which possesses it and utilises it for its own purposes, This consciousness is to the soul what the rays of the sun are to the Sun, which reveals at any moment the objects to its own substrate and reveals itself along with them. Anubhūtitvam nāma vartamānadaśāyām svasattayaiva svāśrayam prati prakāśamānatvam. Svasattayaiva svaviṣayasādha natvam vā. Thus it is svayam-prakāśa but not svasmai- prakāśa. As a function of the soul or knower it is known as jñāna. It is unlike a quality for it is deemed to be a dravya for it is capable of expansion and contraction or in other words capable of modification (avasthāvad dravyam) even as the rays of the Sun. But it is not a substance in the sense in which the soul or Atman is a substance.

The consciousness as a function is incapable of being considered as a body (śarīra) of the soul, since even though a dravya in so far as it undergoes modification, it does not fulfil the conditions laid down for its being called a śarīra, since it is an attribute (viśeṣaṇa) of the sentient soul through which alone a body is utilised, controlled and enjoyed by its substrate. Śrī Venkatanātha writes on this point most clearly; " Yasya cetanasya yad dravyam sarvātmanā svārthe niyantum dhārayitum ca śakyam yaccheṣataikasvarūpam ca tat tasya śarīram : atra.....cetanasyeti caitanya-viśiṣṭatayā pratisam bandhitayā nirdeśāt dharma-bhūta-jñānasya śarīratvam nirasyaate. Na hi jñānam jñāna-viśiṣṭasyādheyaśeṣabhūtam (Tattva-muktā-kalāpa, p. 531.)

The other doctrine which is more important than the doctrine of *dharma-bhūta-jñāna* and is unique to Rāmānuja's system and is the cardinal principle of his system, is the *śarīra-śarīrī- bhāva*. Throughout this thesis I have sought clarification of all the diverse problems implicit in his Theory of knowledge with its help. What is essential in a constructive exposition and criticism of any school, is not so much the ability to refute other systems and the presentation of the thesis as emerging from these discussions but the necessity to show the synthetic Organic or integral theory in its largest development. I have in this thesis attempted to do it in respect of his epistemology and have shown how it is closely inter-related with the metaphysical

and religious issues which confront us almost every minute. This is the first time such an attempt has been made.

This work was accepted for the *Doctor of Philosophy* degree by the University of Madras in 1932. It is substantially the same, though certain parts have been considerably expanded and appendixes have been added.

I am deeply thankful to the authorities of the Sri Venkateswara Oriental Institute and the T. T. D Committee for having included it in their Sri Venkateswara Oriental Series. To my Professor P.N. Srinivasacharya who kindly wrote the foreword to this work, I offer my heartfelt thanks. To Sri P. V. Ramanujasvami, M.A., Director of the S. V. O. I. And General Editor of this Series, I wish to express my gratitude for his special interest, To Sri D. T. Tatacharya, M.O.L, Curator of the S, V. O. I. who helped me in correction of the proofs I owe sincerest obligations. A word of thanks is due to the Manager of the T.T. D. Press, for having supervised the work and seen to its publication early despite many difficulties,

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