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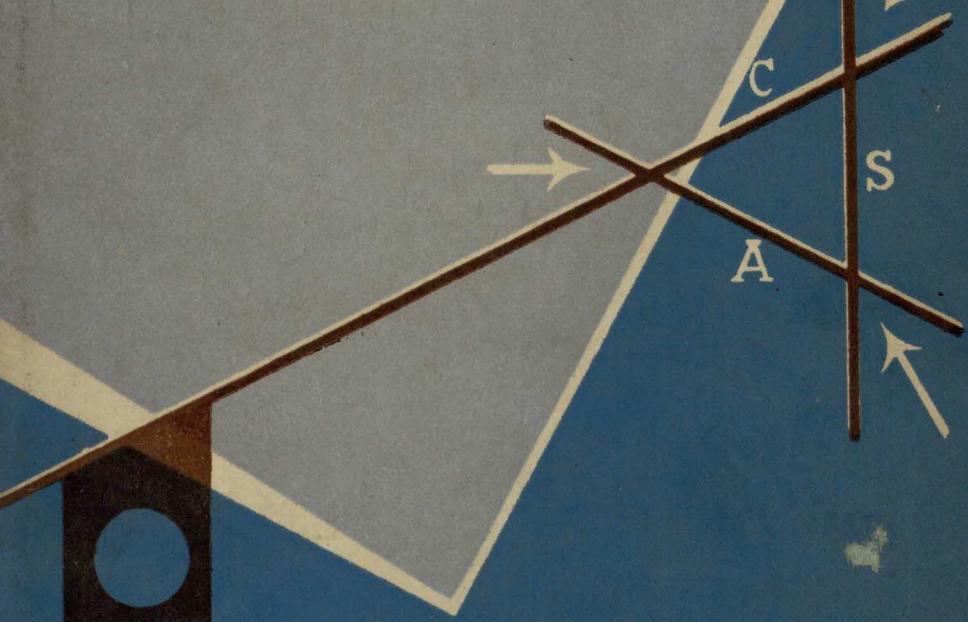
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# ONTOLOGY OF ADVAITA

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MĀYĀ

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Dr. K. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

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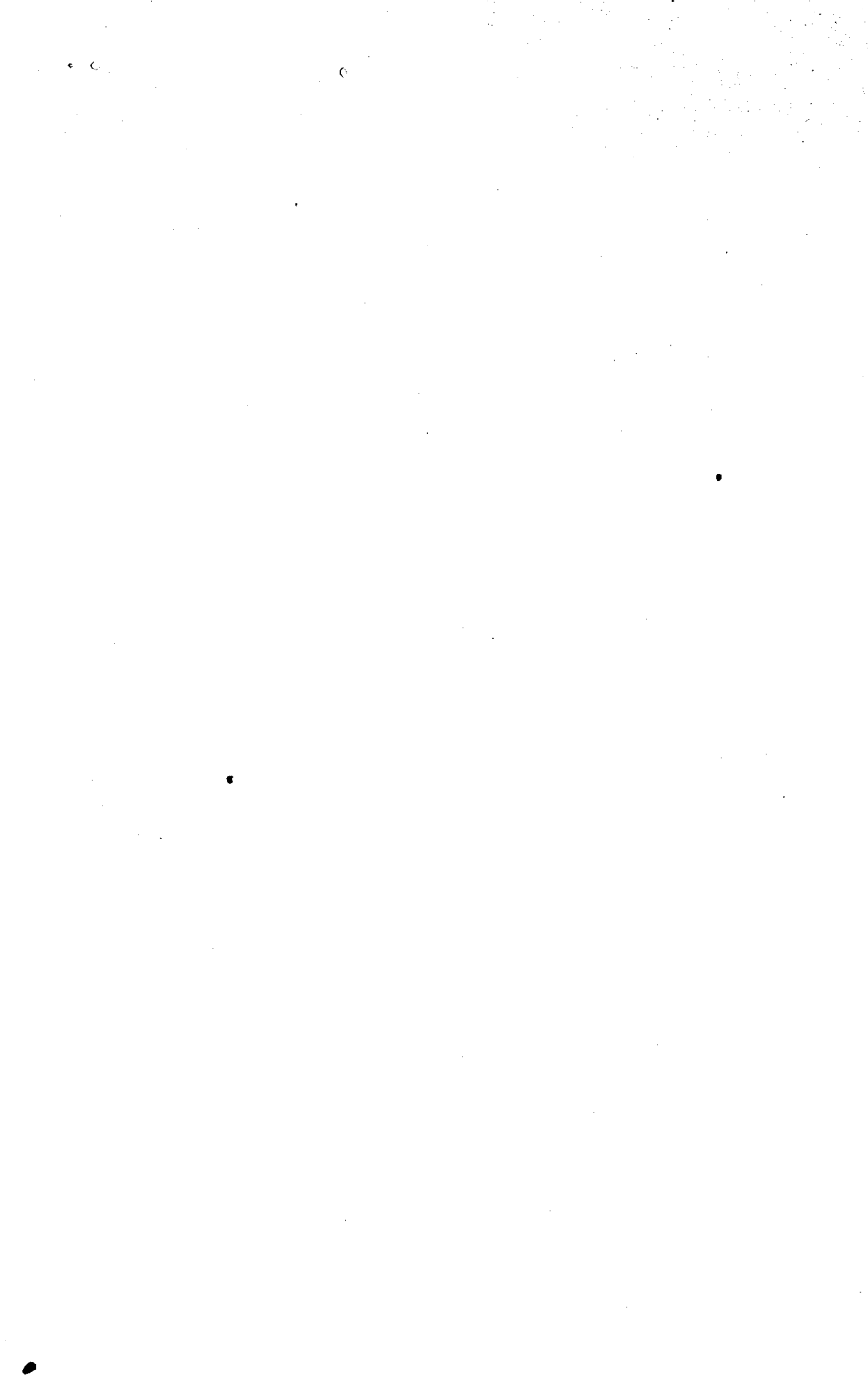
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# ONTOLOGY OF ADVAITA

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WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MĀYĀ

*By*

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VIJAYA COLLEGE, MULKI

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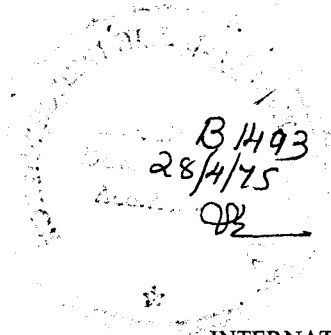
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# RESEARCH & PUBLICATION

VIJAYA COLLEGE, MULKI

## P R E F A C E

The College takes pride in undertaking a scheme of publication of two types of works, namely, of research value and of popular interest, by the members of the teaching staff. It is believed that the work of the teacher does not stop with teaching the students in the class—which is a part of the teacher's routine duty—but also, to keep himself engaged in study, and to give the benefits of his study to non-students also. With this idea, we thought it fit to undertake the work of publishing periodically papers and books of standing value both to the layman and to the serious student. No doubt, under the prevailing conditions of economy, this is an ambitious scheme, but it is considered a necessity if one is to preserve the academic atmosphere in a College.

This monograph is the second in the series, and is released through the Department of Philosophy. It is ardently hoped that the book will be received well by the readers.

MULKI (S. KANARA)  
15th Sept., 1964

DR. K. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAO  
GENERAL EDITOR

TO  
MY MOTHER

## INTRODUCTION

THE metaphysical objection to the Monism of Śāṅkara Vedānta has been the very life of polarity we are living. Realism and Pluralism are more convincing to us in our daily life and experience, so that within the realm of Vedānta historical developments compromising or even opposing Advaita have originated, the most notable being the systems of Rāmānuja and Madhva. The philosophical excursus on Māyā seems to be so taxing on our understanding, that more often we accept the reality of the world than deny it. The Inductive and Positive Sciences of to-day generally—excepting occasional speculative leanings towards suggesting the relativity of existence—tend to support the ‘concreteness’ of our existence and experience. On the whole the scales are against Idealism and Monism, either because we cannot ignore the ‘hard fact’ of our life of difference and multiplicity, or because we cannot be convinced of the idealistic and monistic truth.

In the history of Advaita, we find the Advaitins on the defensive regarding the relativity of the world phenomena and the non-duality of the individual and Absolute selves. And more than once we find the realistic and pluralistic arguments being decisive. As though by force of

circumstances, compromises have been worked out within the range of Advaita, and accommodations to realism and pluralism can be discovered in the writings of Advaita thinkers. The epistemological reality of the object was not denied even by Śankarāchārya. And the different interpretations given of the locus of Māyā by the eminent followers of Śankara (*e.g.* Sureśvara, Vācaspathi Miśra, Sarvajñātman etc.) appear as though the thinkers were trying to meet the challenge of the critics of Advaita from time to time, but could not convincingly do so. One of the greatest stumbling blocks facing all thinkers of this school seems to be the explanation of the original lapse of the Absolute Consciousness into the māyā-bound individual soul. What may be, with difficulty, established is the reverse process of māyā-vimukti and its possibility through sādhana, but not the lapse into polarity of the Absolute. It is on this crucial point, as it were, that the adversaries of Monism or Absolutism seem to have scored a victory.

Is there not, after all, a logical solution in favour of Advaita, if no such solution has been offered till now by the mighty adherents of the school? It seems as though that no logically convincing explanation has been given in this regard, and therefore, a humble attempt to do so may not be idle in itself. In recent times Dr. Radhakrishnan is championing the views of Absolute Monism of Śankara, yet, it is not difficult

to discover a compromising tendency in his thinking. The only exception seems to be the writings of Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya, who offers an uncompromising advaitic or absolute stand-point. Where it is difficult to maintain an uncompromising advaitic position, it is easy to lapse into a compromise with the realisitic attitude, and this has been the fateful history of Advaita. This has been so mainly because the ontological aspect of Advaita has been clearly missed either by the followers of Śankara or by his critics.

It is submitted here that a convincing logical answer is possible for establishing the ontological absolutism of Advaita, and that the epistemological approaches resorted to generally are wrongly applied. The problem has been presented here on an objective basis, avoiding all overt references to opposing schools, but the issues involved may easily be recognised. The endeavour is more than anything a critical examination of the Advaitic ontology and its implications, in view of the objections raised against the philosophy by eminent critics.

A word may be said about the terms like epistemology, psychology, logic, used here as against ontology. Ontology has been used here in its basic sense of 'existential' intuition, 'basic' experience, 'isness' of all Being. The other terms have been taken in their general significance as they refer to all mental processes of ideations, inferences,

## INTRODUCTION

validations etc. relative to human empirical experience.

References to views, criticisms and sources have been separated from the main body of the essay to avoid discontinuity of thought, and have been placed at the end under Notes.

Finally, I place the endeavour before the scholars for a sympathetic and philosophical review.

**K. B. Ramakrishna Rao**

Mulki, South Kanara.

April, 1964.

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WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MĀYĀ

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## THE PURPOSE OF THE ENDEAVOUR

1. This book has only a humble purpose to serve: to draw the implications of Advaita Vedānta (Absolute Monism, as it may be called in terms of Western philosophy)<sup>1</sup> and to submit that the ontological absolutism on which Advaita metaphysics rests gives least scope for the criticisms generally levelled against the concept of *Māyā* (the principle of Relativity, as it may be called) and its locus in Brahman, the Absolute.<sup>2</sup>

2. Many of the Upanishadic passages imply an ontological absolutism of Brahman, and the following illustrations from the *Chāndogya* and *Bṛihadāranyaka* may well initiate the discussion:

“In the beginning there was that only which *is (sat)*, one only without a second.” (Ch. Up. VI, 2, 1)

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