

**BOOK-REVIEW**

DAS, G. P. ; *VEDĀNTA – PARIBHĀSĀ : AN ANALYTICAL STUDY*; Anu Books, Meerut (1986), pp. 8 + 175,  
Price Rs. 90-00 (Hard Cover.).

The book under review is a scholarly attempt of re-interpreting and re-constructing Advaita-Vedāntic philosophy in such a way that Advaita Vedānta as presented by Dharmarājadhvarīndra in the *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* is made to appear as pure philosophy in a contemporary sense of the term. A primary question with regard to any such interpretation and reconstruction is whether the interpreter claims that his interpretation and reconstruction is nothing but putting the same content in a different idiom and different form, or he does not advance any such claim. G. P. Das seems to claim that he is presenting Dharmarājā's original position in the current idiom of philosophical analysis in order that the position becomes intelligible to the modern reader. The truth of his claim is doubtful.

In the view of the author *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* is a specimen of pure philosophy in the sense of 'logical analysis of language' or 'descriptive metaphysics' But if *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* has to be a specimen of logical analysis of language and not of revisionary metaphysics, ontology or epistemology then it should not contain statements about things, facts or knowledge but only about statements of facts and knowledge-claims. However, Dharmarājā in his *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* all the while talks about knowledge and objects of knowledge. He talks about language mainly while discussing *āgama* as a *pramāṇa*. It is interesting to see how in

spite of such fundamental difficulties the author has tried to project his deviant interpretation on the text.

In order to present and defend his interpretation the author seems to have read too much between the lines and words of the text. This has given rise to many oddities and inconsistencies. Only a few are being cited here.

The author treats *āgama* to be the special method of establishing philosophical knowledge and hence interprets it as 'logical analysis of language.' This interpretation is odd for at least two reasons. The definition of *āgama* given by Dharmarāja does not say that a sentence is *pramāṇa* only if it establishes knowledge by way of logical *analysis*. It is one thing to say that Dharmarāja provides us with a logical analysis of language while explaining *āgama-pramāṇa* and quite another to say that *āgama* itself means logical analysis of language. Secondly, the explanation and illustrations of *āgama* given by Dharmarāja nowhere exclude the possibility of *āgama* being a source of the knowledge of extra-linguistic facts.

The author translates *caitanya* as pure cognition (p. 28). But his translations of *viśaya-caitanya*, *pramāṇa-caitanya* and *pramāṭṛcaitanya* are not consistent with it. For example, sometimes *viśayacaitanya* is translated as 'idea of object' (p. 28), while sometimes else as 'object of knowledge' (p. 31). Dharmarāja himself defines *viśayacaitanya* as *ghaṭādyavacchinna caitanya* which neither means *idea* of a pot nor pot as an *object of knowledge*.

The author identifies subject-object-dichotomy (the dichotomy of *viśayin* and *viśaya*) as discussed by Śaṅkara with subject-predicate dichotomy as discussed by P. F. Strawson. This identification is made without giving any explanation or justification. The author treats after Strawson (after Śaṅkara too?)

'this' and 'I' as the limits of factual knowledge and claims that *Brahman* means the whole of knowledgeable existence which exceeds these limits. The author also identifies 'the whole of knowledgeable existence,' 'existence as such' and 'knowledge as such.' This claim for identification is as obscure as any metaphysical claim. But the author would not accept this charge. On the contrary, he claims that the Advaitic conception of ultimate reality is not metaphysical but philosophical-logical.

G. P. Das's deviant interpretation of *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* exhibits a self-consistent network of philosophical-logical considerations and an ontology closely linked with them. The reader may find the network interesting and illuminating if he can think and imagine with the author. But such a deviant interpretation of *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* arouses a more serious expectation from the author that he should try to substantiate this interpretation with a literal translation of the text. Otherwise any cautious reader is likely to feel that the author might have conveniently omitted phrases and lines from the text inconsistent with the attempted interpretation and filled in the gaps with his own ideas or ideas borrowed from some other source. Bad indology seems to have resulted in the course of attempting a good philosophy.

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