

RĀMĀNUJA AND YUSUF KHAS HAJIB ON SPIRITUALITY AND DEVOTION



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ABSTRACT

This *seminal* paper aims to explore the parallels and discernible views in the writings of Indian philosopher Rāmānuja and the Uzbek thinker Yusuf Khas Hajib on their world views in general and spirituality and devotion in particular. Despite being born in two different regions and hailing from different religious roots, there appear to be some significant intellectual connections and philosophical affinities between the two contemporary philosophers of the 11th century that could be of great help for the people of Uzbekistan and India in assimilating their knowledge and ways of life and furthering their individual and collective transformation within, and in the world. The paper will highlight three points: *Firstly*, Rāmānuja, a Hindu saint devoted to Lord Vishnu and a pioneer of the Bhakti movement in India, practiced and preached moral and spiritual paths to divine perfection in life, whereas Yusuf Khas Hajib adopted and advocated for a morally virtuous path to goodness and happiness. Both of them, however, devoted their lives to reforming the people and society. *Secondly*, while Rāmānuja focuses on saintly religious life with love and devotion towards God with the aim of getting closer to God and making this and transcendental life meaningful, Yusuf Khas Hajib's focus is more on education and acquiring knowledge so as to make worldly life meaningful and satisfying by developing characters like friendship and justice. *Thirdly*, both Rāmānuja and Yusuf Khas Hajib stressed the importance of introspection, continuous self- development and commitment to God in order to be blessed by His grace without which man is nothing, so to say from a spiritual point of view.