CHAPTER 11
RAJAJI'S VIEWS ON PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Although the realms of religion and science are different, Rajaji says, they can all be integrated through human experience in realizing the good of the society. Knowledge at all levels is linked to social development, without which mere indulgence in intellectual activity becomes a kind of selfish activity. From this point of view Rajaji sees a greater scope for Vedanta to serve mankind. The different paths outlined are there only to suit the different temperaments of people, but they do not show any fundamental difference.

11.1 SCIENCE, RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Rajaji considers that the development of society depends upon true knowledge of the world aided by virtues which in turn is supported by religious faith. Science and religion, though essential to mankind, belong to the different realms of human experience. While science gives the power to control the physical world and the society, through intellectual activity, it does not cover life as a whole. It is only faith that can provide a way to the comprehension of the ultimate. This does not mean that science and religion stood in opposition. "Truth is one and indivisible and the seat of harmony or unity of thought is the human mind on which all external impulses impinge."
It is impossible for the mind to accept a truth for some purposes and reject it for others.¹

11.1.1 Scientific knowledge:

Bajaji's approach to science is mainly related to the development of scientific attitude and alertness to perceive order in nature. Bajaji makes a threefold analysis of scientific knowledge. The first one refers to mere knowledge of the physical world. The second aspect refers to a level of awareness to the method of gathering genuine scientific knowledge. At the third level the limitations of science and an awareness to the fundamental concepts of science develops. In addition to the three lines of approach Bajaji brings the question of subordinating scientific technology to morals. Awareness to the deeper problems of science opens the need for faith in religion.

Bajaji was aware of the prized achievements of science in different fields of his time. The understanding and development of knowledge of order is expounded by him with the help of a simple analogy of a tribal watching a cricket match without any previous knowledge of the rules of the game. In the beginning he sees the movements of the ball, the players and the score board as independent entities. Gradually he associates certain movements of the ball with the coming

in and going out of the players. He tries to arrive at a set of rules and instead of perceiving indiscernible movements he is able to arrange them under simple rules. If the tribal has been briefed earlier of the game he would have applied the rules to the situation without going through the process of evolving a set of rules to explain the sequence of the game. Similarly the game of nature is understood by man by building up a set of rules which are supposed to explain the sequence of phenomena. Genuine science comes into existence by induction, for the Creator did not present man with a set of rules of the game of nature in the beginning.

What we call scientific 'explanation', Anjali says, is nothing but codifying and clarifying the data available and stating the ordered sequence of phenomena. But explanation of 'why' things follow a certain order, or 'why' they have certain attributes is something which science cannot bring to light.

11.1.8 Limitations of Science

Anjali refers to successful scientists as those who 'explain' mere phenomena through simplistic laws. In other words, 'simplification' of statements and explanations to cover a wider ground of scientific events mark the development of science. At the same time Anjali refers to the limitations of science in the following manner:

Science 'explains' all these wonders, that is, puts things in proper order of cause and effect up to a point. Then we proceed to examine
fundamentals of things and go deep down into that
evaluation, we go beyond science into the realm
of metaphysics. The border line between science
and religion in what we call metaphysics.
Metaphysics is mainly negative. It furnishes
the reason—why—for religious.

Rajaji says that our advances in science never
seem within a definite territory but 'this does not take
us across the border.' Science cannot jump beyond the realm
of phenomena, but can only furnish us with mere points
regarding phenomena. The borderline is marked by chapters
dealing with the fundamentals in physics like 'cause',
'effect', 'law', and so on. 'Physical phenomena follow
certain sequences. These sequences are not cut by men of
science as a result of numerous observations, observations
being planned for the purpose. Planned observations are
called experiments.'

11.1.3 The need for religion
Science can give knowledge, but is incapable of
assessing human situations. Assessment belongs to the realm
of ethics and religion. Overenthusiasm in science, unguided
by ethics and religion may prove dangerous. Rajaji refers
to the 'forbidden fruit' as nothing but a warning by God not
to meddle with nature by taking the intellect into confidence.
There cannot be a remark so wise, and at the same time, so

2. “Science, Philosophy and Religion,” RJS., Vol. II,
p.957.
3. ibid., p.957.
soothing as the following one regarding our meddling with the atom:

It was an unfortunate day when science lifted the curtain of fundamental matter and trespassed into the greenroom of creation. It seems as if outraged Nature is having her revenge. Knowledge must go into penitence and humble condition and forgiveness.

In the field of industry man becomes a slave by his excessive dependence upon machines, which deprives him of his values and makes him to look at his fellow beings as machines and targets of his techniques of propaganda and indoctrination. Russell had a similar opinion when he said: "The idolatry of the machine is an abomination. The Machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern idolatry."

Even a determined sceptic cannot deny the impact of massive industrialisation in polluting the biosphere of our planet. Use of scientific technology invariably involves the ethical problem of avoiding some of the ghastly penalties imposed upon lively things. Space exploration is equally wrong in that we do not know how to assess the damage with the help of our present knowledge. Gradually science, propaganda and political power serve the totalitarianism


interests of the politicians leading to human exploitation. Russell warned us very seriously that a technocratic society would usher in a new oligarchy of science, which, once formed, cannot be so easily eliminated or controlled.

Trying to control science through ethics is not a practical suggestion, for without a fear of the unknown or of the Creator the talk of morals becomes a lip service.

Neither science by itself, nor moral teachings alone, can achieve the purpose. Morality may run for some time on a previously acquired religious momentum. When the momentum is spent, it will stop dead. Moral teachings that are associated with a divinely inspired personality are religion and stand on a different footing from mere maxims printed on school literature.

Rajaji feels that science, and religion are approaching the same truth from different angles. Genuine scientists like Einstein displayed more concern for religious faith than for even science. Rajaji draws support from Fyodor who said:

Morals cannot stand on their own feet, but must be based on religion. We cannot make new religions in cold blood but must stick to traditional religions, clearing out non-essential accretions.

Rajaji is of the opinion that any triumph of science is a triumph of religion when there is harmony between science, ethics and religion, for truth is one.

11.2 Vedanta: its relevance to society

The system of Vedanta is not just the outcome of a single author but is the result of the teachings of the world's wisest men, who taught through speech, symbolology and dialogue. Anjaji's comment upon Swami Vivekananda's service to society reveals that he believed much in a symbolic approach to Vedanta. Anjaji comments as follows:

Reformers in all departments of life there were many, but the nation suffered from a basic weakness, a sense of inferiority, which it was necessary to cure; and Swami Vivekananda did it in a most effective way. He wanted spirituality to govern politics, and every other effort. In that he anticipated Mahatma Gandhi. He did not want any one to believe that Hinduism had to be needed in order to make it good enough. He saw it as a whole and claimed it was extremely true. ... Let us bring the God when Vivekananda worshipped in all our actions. All evils will then either away by a natural process.

The comment cited reveals that Anjaji believed in looking at Vedanta as a practical way of life which would spiritualize all our thoughts and actions. Anjaji expounds the claim of Vedanta by first showing the discrepancies that exist in the society and how they are reconciled by Vedanta. In the next stage Anjaji brings to light the universal elements in Vedanta which can be applied to all sections and cultures.

One of the basic maladies of the present day society

is that it reserves religious activity to a realm that has nothing to do with one's life. Vedanta is committed to search and worship of Truth and living in the light of Truth. Once this attitude dominates, the individual learns to develop a detached outlook to the enjoyment of the fruits of action. From this point of view, Vedanta can be considered as a universal religion, for it can be followed by people of various denominations without prejudice to the smooth functioning of life in society. The concepts of self-control (śraddha), compassion (jñāna) and charity (dāna) as taught by the paramāndra Rishis, when practised by people, can solve many of the social problems which arise mainly out of selfishness and lack of self-control. At the end set Anaji deals with some of the disharmonies which exist in the society.

11.2.4 Disharmonies in society:

Disharmonies in society, according to Anaji, exist mainly because of applying different standards to the same kind of problem. "It is impossible for the mind to accept a truth for some purposes and reject it for others." 9

Anaji examines some of the disharmonies created in the fields of science, morals and politics, which draw the individual to different directions.

The contradictions are ignored or treated as inevitable and no attempt is made to reconcile them with one another. It has become another accepted axiom that contradictions between religion and practical affairs must be deemed unavoidable! This is not a form of reconciliation but chronic disharmony, and it must result in injury to the minds of men and consequently to social well-being. 10

One of the disharmonies created by wrong understanding of science is atheism. There are two reasons for atheism which go in the name of science, with limited knowledge of science, we begin to believe that the world exists by virtue of the natural laws. This is because the individual has not gained access to the Creator of these natural laws. Another reason is that the world goes on its own without interference from its Creator. Bajaji says that this perfect 'decentralisation' leads us to think that the world exists by itself. It is also interesting to note Bajaji's explanation bears some resemblance with the arguments advanced by Leibnitz, who believed that the world is like a perfect clock which required no intervention from its maker, once it is set in motion. There is another disharmony in science which supports the argument that Darwinism and materialism cannot be accepted by religion. Bajaji says that the Pre-Socratic were who were committed to the search for truth would be too happy to accept the discoveries of the physical and biological sciences as forming part of their explanations. The laws of physics and biology fit in very well with Vedantic statements which
support the independent working of nature within its own realm. Rajaji cites the following verses from the Gita to justify his claim:

Using nature, which is mine own, I create again and again all this multitude of beings, keeping them dependent upon nature.  

Gita, II. 8

in the scheme of my sovereignty nature brings forth everything, moving and unmov ing, and keeps the world going.  

Gita, II. 10

Natural philosophy and philosophy of religion are shown to be in unison, according to Vedanta. Every attempt at revealing the secrets of nature is considered to be an addition to the fund of knowledge that is already with us. That science is as we say running contradictory to Vedanta is expressed by Rajaji by citing a passage from Francis Bacon:

I had rather believe all fables (collected in books) than that this universal frame is without a mind...they that deny a God destroy a man's nobility. For certainly man is of him to the hearts by his body; and if he be not kin to god by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature. 11

"As for the contradiction between religion and that class of worldly activities of intelligent men called politics, the divergence is even greater than that between

science and religion. The Western division of politics from morals and religion is the root cause behind this kind of disharmony that affects the social and political life of our society. The acceptance of the teachings of the scriptures like the \textit{Itiha\=sa}, the \textit{s\=tra} and the \textit{k\=rama} can effectively bring a synthesis between politics, morals and religion.

The laws of nature that we have come to know, the philosophy we believe in, the statecraft that we practise should all be made to accord and harmonise with one another if we hope successfully to face the problems that confront us in the present most complicated world.

11.2.2 \textbf{The universal applicability of Vedanta:}

We have seen how human energy is wastefully consumed by the disharmonies in science, morals and politics and also how Vedanta can reconcile these contradictions. Anjali brings to light certain universal elements in Vedanta, which can guide our social institutions. Equal dignity and sanctity of all forms of labour is the key to social harmony, that is taught in Vedanta. Welfare of the community (\textit{J\=anas\=asya}) linked with the equal dignity of all labour makes the individual work for the society shedding all selfishness. The \textit{Upanishads} give us a picture of how the

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world is evolved out of the principle of sacrifice, thus stimulating the altruistic element of the human personality. Doing one's duty, without unnecessarily worrying about the perfection of others brings refers at the individual level with minimum dependence upon coercive authority.

Vedanta has a number of prayers and symbolic forms of worship which aim at universal welfare and can be adopted by any religion. These mantras are not addressed towards any particular God but direct our prayers to the one ultimate Spirit for the good of the world. maha refers to paripurna that is performed according to custom, the meaning of which runs as follows:

O you water that delight in losing yourself and disappearing, create in me too that delight in being lost in the whole! 14

This prayer can be adopted by any one of any culture, which will raise his thinking in terms of doing some sacrifice or other for the benefit of the society. The Bh Vedic prayer asking for noble thoughts from every side (Bh Veda, I-59-4) or the prayer in the Bhadramayana (I-iii-28) which seeks release from untruth, farseness and mortality are examples to show the universal character of Vedanta.

Vedanta teaches us to develop a love for the Ultimate

Truth and living in accordance with it in all our activities, both personal and social. It is with this outlook only that Anjaji said that Vedanta, both in theory and practice, bears a great relevance for the effective functioning of the social institutions.

11.3 Bhakti and social institutions:

Bhakti or intense devotion to God may look as though it is a personal affair of an individual, having nothing to do with the society. But Anjaji tries to establish that devotion to God leads to devotion to society.

11.3.1 Arguments for Bhakti:

Bhakti is a state of mind to be cultivated by the individual which dissolves the ego of the individual through the identity that is established between man and God—God becomes the object of love. Although a number of his articles and speeches give a high place to Bhakti, the following works are mainly devoted to this aspect of them:

1) Bhainavvidesha Tamil and English
2) Bhakti Maha Tamil
3) Anandal Maha Tamil
4) Bhakti Svaran Tamil

Anjaji's concept of Bhakti can be traced to the Bhakti tradition of the Vaigyanika Advaita and to a certain extent, to that of the Saiva Advaita (there are a number of
references to Saint Manickavachagar). Philosophically he
supports visishtadiva view point and associates himself
more with Vaippava literature. This does not mean that his
views are sectarian to the exclusion of non-Vaippava forms
of them. Bajaji's commentary on Harivamsa of
Bhakti Hrri, in fact, emphasises this synthetic approach.
His work on Brother Lawrence and his defence of the
infallibility of the Kaka bear testimony to his universal
outlook.

"Only Bhakti is the means to realise God. Nature
bhakti alone is jnan. This is a truth of the Vaippava
system."16 "Knowledge which has become nature is spoken
of as devotion."17 Bajaji is also aware that mere
knowledge cannot take an individual beyond a certain limit.

Enlightenment cannot come from extensive study or
by learned discussion or through intellect. It
comes of itself when one's self intensely yearns for
realisation, but not unless the mind has turned
away from evil and has learnt to control itself and
to be at peace with the world. 18

15. cf. C. RajaGopalachari, Bhakti Hrri, ed.
A. Thrivunavkkaraa, 3rd ed. (Andras: Vanathi Padippagam,

16. Ibid., p.10.

17. C. RajaGopalachari, BhajaGundam, ed. K.K.Kanji

18. Katha Upanishad, I.11.23-24 cited in Hinduism,
3rd ed., p.46.
Rajaji is of the view that as long as man is associated with the body mind complex, mere knowledge cannot free him from bondage. Rajaji suggests that complete surrender to God and God's grace are necessary for the liberation of man. God's grace is so effective that it can liberate even the worst sinner when there is sincere devotion and complete surrender.

11.3.2 Shakti and Devotion

Rajaji says that the Shakti school of theology has left a far greater impression upon our conduct than the Advaita doctrines associated with Sri Sankara. This does not mean that he was opposed to Advaita or Sankara's thought. It is generally said that the system of Advaita has no place for Shakti. Rajaji says that this charge is baseless, for the various gita-sastra composed by Sankara give evidence for the acceptance of Shakti in the Advaita system.

Rajaji tries to integrate action, devotion and knowledge as a result of which his theme tends towards making the individual more altruistic, which is evident from the following statement he made on

"When intelligence matures and lodges securely in the heart, it becomes vision. When that vision is integrated with life and issues out in action it becomes devotion."19 One of the pre-conditions for Shakti is

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avoiding evil and dissolving one's ego. A number of social problems which arise out of ego and association with evil can be avoided if love towards God dominates our mind. ‘Dharma and Bhakti are society's precious assets.' At the social level dharma and bhakti find expression in the form universal love and compassion.

The individual who is attached to God does his work by completely surrendering himself to God through sincerity. Such a person sees God every where and treats every one with equality, without attaching any importance to social status. Sympathy and love take the place of brutality and hatred, paving the way for the social doctrine of trusteeship. A society which gives importance to the ultimate superiority of God and 'surrender to him', can breed individuals who are selfless and fearless social workers. For the one who loves God and his creation there is nothing to fear and he is bold in resisting untruth and in reforming those who have gone out of the way. In this sense bhakti can lead to a society which does not attach too much importance to mere material success through unapproved means.

11.4 Ajali's philosophy of God and humanity

We have seen how the limitations of science led to the need for ethics and religion from the point of view of the human situation. Apart from the human need for God,
the question of God as an independent category is established by Rajaji from a metaphysical point of view.

11.4.1 

Proofs for the existence of God:

Rajaji's arguments are no doubt traditional and depend upon science and scriptures. Rajaji makes use of the development in Astrophysics and Einstein's energy equation to establish that everything can be reduced to energy ultimately. He says that we have to accept a first cause which is not the effect of another cause. "The 

The first cause which by evolution transformed itself into the universe and, among other things into this most wonderful human mind cannot be a lifeless or unintelligent entity, although the nature of that intelligence may be very different from human intelligence and is a closed book." Rajaji says that the 

Rajaji also made a similar search for the first cause and arrived at a point beyond which the intelligence of man failed. The original being, Rajaji says, was 'Brahma' which was causeless. The 'Brahma' is of the nature of consciousness. Rajaji refers to the universal mind of Marcus Aurelius as something similar to the 'Brahma' of the 

The search for an original cause and an attempt to explain design in nature necessarily leads to accepting the original cause as mental. Rajaji tries to explain that 'Brahma' 

is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the universe by referring to the analogy of the spider weaving the web out of its own body as follows:

As the spider draws its thread out of itself and is lord over the web it produces, so shrubs and plants grow from the earth, as hair grows on the bodies of living beings, so has all this universe come out of the imperishable. 21

Anjali is not in favour of trying to prove the existence of God by pointing out to miracles. Laws of nature are established by the Creator and the so called miracles generally refer to breaking these laws which are the outward expression of the inner controller of the universe. Anjali refers to Rama who used conventional means to cross the ocean in moving his army towards Lanka. If Rama resorted to breaking natural Law in order to move his army he would be defying himself and it would mean setting a bad example to the world.

11.4.2 Belief in God and social values

The acceptance of the existence of God is the basis of dharma. For dharma is an essence of God. It is through adherence to dharma that we can bring order in society. The laissez-faire type of competition that exists between human beings can be curtailed if men can understand that there is
an Intelligent Being watching and guiding our actions through the all pervading arm of dharma. Accepting the existence of God leads to the question of realization. This takes us to a system of ethics, which supports altruism, sacrifice and co-operation.