

Vedānta as the Basic Culture of India Through the Lens of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari

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ABSTRACT

Vedānta is one of the ancient Indian philosophies which is mainly based on sacred scriptures known as the Triple canonical text or Prasthānatrayī, i.e. Upanishads (Śruti Prasthāna), Gītā (Smṛiti Prasthāna) and Bāḍrayāna's Brahmasūtra (Nyāya Prasthāna). While Hinduism incorporates features of Indian culture, Vedānta provides the philosophical underpinning of Hinduism. Vedānta is universal in scope and applies to all countries, civilisations and religions. Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, also known as 'Rajaji' or 'C.R.', was 'an ardent patriot, an astute politician, an inclusive thinker, and one of the great statesmen modern India produced'. He drew inspiration for his ideas and actions from a deep love for the people and the Motherland, as well as a strong belief in our spiritual and cultural legacy. As Dr. Radhakrishnan said, Rajaji is "a part of our history". He has done a tremendous job by writing several books on Indian Culture. This paper aims to understand the concept of Vedānta as the basis of Indian Culture through the perspective of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari.

Keywords: Rajagopalachari, Culture, Hinduism, Vedānta, Ethics

INTRODUCTION

Vedānta is one of the ancient Indian philosophies established by Śaṅkara and subsequently influenced by other *darśanas*. Isayeva, in her book *Shankara and Indian Philosophy*, writes that "Vedanta emerged after India had passed through Buddhist temptation and was moving back towards the womb of Brahmanist Religion" (Isayeva, 1993). Vedānta, literally meaning the end portion of the Vedas, is interpreted as a school having its immediate source in the final portions of the Vedas, i.e., in the Upaniṣads (Swaroop, 2024). According to orthodox philosophical schools, Vedānta is usually grouped with Mīmāṃsā and known as later or Uttara-Mīmāṃsā. In contrast to Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, which also declared its close connection with sacred scripture, "Vedānta teaches not about rituals, rules and laws but about the integral sense of revelation" (Isayeva, 1993). Of course, modern thinkers did not invent

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Vedānta. As Torwesten writes in his book *Vedanta: Heart of Hinduism*, “They only simplified and modernised the ancient teachings of the Upaniṣads concerning the innately divine nature of man and pointed to the various yogic paths leading to the highest realisation of the self” (Torwesten, 1985). Among modern thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and other spiritual teachers, Rajagopalachari was also an exponent of Indian culture and the philosophy of Vedānta.

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (1878-1972), also called ‘Rajaji’ or ‘C.R.’, was “a great patriot, an astute in political acumen, an inclusive thinker, and achieved eminence as a statesman and administrator, writer and scholar that modern India produced” (Char, 1978). He was born in December 1878 as the “third and last child of father Venkatarya Iyengar and mother Singaramma, in a South Indian village called Thorapalli” (Gandhi, 1997). If we look upon the life and work of Rajagopalachari, we may divide it into four phases: first, as a lawyer and administrator in the early twentieth century; Second, as a freedom fighter during the freedom struggle of India, third, as a Politician after Independence; and lastly as an influential writer. That is why Jay Prakash Narayana ranked him “next only to Gandhiji in political wisdom and maturity and rightly regarded him as the Nestor of Modern Indian Politics” (Rajagopalachari, 1977). Even Mahatma Gandhi once called him his “Conscience-keeper” (Kripalani, 1993), and K. Thiagarajan called him “the conscience-keeper of India as well; the moral sentinel, the lodestar of intellectual integrity and the Bhishma of Modern India” (Thiagarajan, 1993). Antony Copley specifies him as a ‘moralist in Politics’ and ‘Gandhi’s Southern Commander’ (Copley, 1986). Ramchandra Guha in his book *Makers of Modern India* termed him as ‘The Gandhian Liberal’ (Guha, 2012).

In this paper, I have emphasised Rajaji as an influential writer. He was a literary giant. He had written numerous books concerning Indian Culture. He has been credited as the author of “*Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Bhaja Govindam* of Adi Śaṅkarācārya, *Kural* of Thiruvalluvar, *Hinduism: Doctrine and Way of Life*”, and many other books related to politics. This paper deals with the various literature of Rajagopalachari in which he analysed the concept of Vedānta. Therefore, I have used the qualitative method, which follows the textual and contextual study of the concerned literature. Textual, to examine the content, structure and design of the text. In literary and cultural studies, textual analysis is a key component of research. It helps in connecting the element of text with contemporary times. To understand the ancient concepts and texts, contextual

methodology is important as we have to enter their social world using historical and psychological imagination. I have also used the method of content analysis as the article seeks to methodically examine content to draw insightful conclusions and patterns from the information. It helps us to fully comprehend the material by allowing to spot underlying themes, implicit messages, and hidden meanings.

Acharya J.B. Kripalani writes that “Rajaji’s literary ability, both in his mother tongue, Tamil and in English, is well known. He wrote not only on religious and philosophical subjects but also produced books for children” (Kripalani, 1993). He was the embodiment of our culture. He looked meek and inoffensive but had a strong will and determination. His work on Hinduism, including the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad Gītā, is considered to be some of the best explanations of Hinduism. The book on ‘Hinduism’ is written in such a lucid style that even a layman can easily grasp the basic principles of Vedānta. It was “Rajaji’s conviction that Vedānta as a faith is suitable for modern times as it was for ancient India” (Kuppuswamy, 1993). He believed that people would be better able to comprehend India if they were aware of the fundamentals related to their philosophy and culture.

ON CULTURE

There are two schools of thought regarding the genesis of culture- the idealistic and the materialistic. According to the former, “the rishis of the Vedic Age caught a glimpse of certain ideas through divine inspiration or through their intuition which, in due course, took the form of an ideal suited to the social conditions and intellectual capacity of the community” (Husain, 2013). They attempted to realise this ideal in the Indo-Gangetic Valley’s physical surroundings, and in the process, they produced the institutions and concepts that comprised Vedic civilisation. The materialistic theory says that “the starting point of culture is the physical environment. In the first stage, factors such as climate, the material resources and the instruments of production used by a people put their particular stamp on man’s collective life. On this basis, they gradually reared the edifice of their religion, their philosophy, their social order” (Husain, 2013). Here, my purpose is not to resolve the dilemma among the philosophical thoughts to choose which one is correct as I agreed with the author Abid Husain who writes that “the evolution of culture is the result of the interplay of both the factors—the physical environment and the metaphysical ideas” (Husain, 2013).

According to Rajaji, “Culture is the sum total of the way of living built by groups of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another. People each with their own long history build up separate patterns of culture” (Rajagopalachari, 2015). Before dealing with the culture of India, he discussed the concept of culture in a general sense. He argued that “when we say an individual is cultured or uncultured, we don’t mean to say he or she is a good or bad person. The two things are different. Good is different from cultured. Culture is not literacy or the ability to play on the *Veena*. It has to do with general behaviour, speech and conduct and is different from the goodness and badness of the character” (Rajagopalachari, 2015).

On 13th Sept. 1953, Rajaji argued in an address to the Indian Committee of Cultural Freedom that “Culture is not just art or literature of dancing or music or painting as it prevails among people. It is the patterns of behaviour generally accepted by a people. Culture is far removed from freedom. No man of culture feels free. He imposes on himself all sorts of restraints. So then, the culture of people is the pattern of restraints that people have, as a whole, after trial and error, through generations, settled down to accept in the interest of social order and happiness” (Rajagopalachari, 1993). Accepting such limitations brings pride and happiness, and there is no anguish or bitterness. This is what sets culture apart from government regulation.

Every culture is founded on and associated with a specific concept. The idea of beauty was deeply ingrained in Greek society. The notion of law and order served as the foundation for Rome's culture. Rajaji writes, “The fundamental concept of self-control is the foundation of Indian culture. As outlined in the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad Gītā, the method of life, the pattern of behaviour accepted as correct and esteemed by the people of India as worthy, by the common folk as well as by the enlightened, is the way of self-control” (Rajagopalachari, 1993). In recent times, the same has been emphasised by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle movement for India. Therefore, the concept of self-control, which recognises the existence and operation of a soul within and permeates the material world, is central to all Indian culture.

Rajaji writes, “All culture in India has been rooted in Vedānta. Whatever courage, heroism, self-sacrifice or greatness is to be found in our history or shown by men and women in India, sprang from the Vedānta which is in our blood and tradition” (Rajagopalachari, 2017). Vedānta remains the living essence and genius of the Indian people to this day. Both historically and currently, Vedānta is the taproot of Indian culture.

THE SOURCE OF VEDĀNTA

Vedānta is one of the ancient Indian philosophies which is mainly based on sacred scriptures known as the Triple canonical text or Prasthānatrayī i.e. Upaniṣads (*Śruti* Prasthāna), Gītā (*Smṛti* Prasthāna) and Brahmasūtra (Nyāya Prasthāna). While Hinduism incorporates features of Indian culture, Vedānta provides the philosophical underpinning of Hinduism. Vedānta is universal in scope and applies to all countries, civilisations and religions. Spiritual teachers like Śāṅkara wrote commentaries on the Brahmasūtra (known as Brahmasūtrabhāṣya), Bhagvad-Gītā and the ten principal Upaniṣads, such that people could understand the inherent meanings of these complex texts. These commentaries became the foundation of the school of Vedānta. In Indian Philosophy, there are many sub-schools of Vedānta. They are “Advaita (Non-dualism) by Śāṅkarācārya, Viśiṣṭādvaita (Qualified Non-dualism) by Rāmānuja, Dvaita (Dualism) by Mādhvācārya” (Puligandla, 1997). Some others are ‘Dvaitādvaita (Dualistic Monism) by Nimbārka, Shuddhādvaita by Vallabhachārya and Achintya Bheda Abheda by Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’.

As Vedānta is derived from the Upaniṣads, the core teaching implies: “Man cannot achieve permanent happiness through physical enjoyment, wealth or the goods of the world, or even by elevation to happier realms above through the performance of sacrifices prescribed by the Vedas- the potency of which was a matter of implicit belief in those times. Happiness can result only from liberation, and spiritual enlightenment can liberate us by breaking the bond of *Karma* and uniting us with the ultimate being” (Rajagopalachari, 2022).

According to Rajaji, “the path of enlightenment runs through stages. The mantras of the Upaniṣads may appear to contradict one another in some places. But if it is remembered that the truth is taught by degrees, the contradictions disappear” (Rajagopalachari, 2022). There are no distinct cults in Vedānta that are centred on the worship of Visnu or Śiva. He further writes, “Controversies over who is the greater god or by which name the Supreme being should be adored do not find a place in it. In his treatises on Vedānta, Śāṅkarācārya uses the word ‘Nārāyaṇa’ to indicate the supreme being. In the *Śaiva-siddhānta* books, the final reality is called ‘Śiva’ names, mental conceptions of the deity for purposes of contemplation, the images of worship, and even the sound ‘Om’ are mere means to turn our hearts towards the supreme” (Rajagopalachari, 2022). Regardless of any denomination in which we are raised, Vedānta is the shared legacy of all Indians.

Rajagopalachari writes that “it is not the teaching of Vedānta that we should renounce the world. It is a mistake to identify Vedānta with retirement from life and social activities. Vedānta calls for renunciations of attachment, desires and passions, but not of daily duties in cooperative life. Vedānta gives us the soul force that will enable us to root out selfishness, egotism, attachment to pleasure and the horror of pain, and to dedicate our lives to the efficient performance of our duties” (Rajagopalachari, 2022). By following Vedānta, we can cultivate resolution and fearlessness to lead a truthful life.

BRAHMAN AND ĀTMAN

Two fundamental concepts revolve around Vedāntic thought, i.e., Brahman and the Individual soul. These two points converge as enlightenment progresses. According to the Upaniṣads, “Brahman is the substance of all existence- the unchanging reality, of which the world of change is a mere manifestation through names and forms. Ātman is the inmost self of man, the eternal, silent, imperishable witness of all change” (Puligandla, 1997). On the relation between Brahman and Ātman, “the sages declared that these two are not different realities, but are two different labels for one and the same unchanging reality underlying the changing world of phenomena, external as well as internal” (Puligandla, 1997). Here we find the highest level Upaniṣadic wisdom that discussed the Brahman: “*aham brahma asmi* (I am Brahma), *tat tvam asi* (That thou art) (Kena I.); *ayam ātmā brahma* (This Self is Brahman) (Bṛhadāraṇyaka I. iv.10); *prajñānam- Brahma* (Pure Consciousness is Brahman) (Bṛhadāraṇyaka II.5)” (Puligandla, 1997).

The first step in Vedānta is to firmly believe that ‘I’ am entirely different from ‘my body’. Man's life can only become one of unwavering truth and detachment when he achieves enlightenment and a strong conviction that there is a spirit within him that is apart from the body and the senses. If men attain that enlightenment, the world will be redeemed. The first clear understanding of the truth about the soul is important. For this reason, the Upaniṣads discuss the individual soul in numerous ways and not only the Pramātmā, the ultimate entity. Vedāntic life will naturally evolve once it is understood that the body is distinct from the individual who inhabits it. Here, Srinivasan writes that “Rajaji leaned towards Rāmānujan’s conception of the intimate relationship between body and soul on the one hand, and the universal and individual souls on the other” (Srinivasan, 2014).

Rajaji further discussed the realisation of the soul. To ‘see’ the soul, intelligence and enquiry are not enough. Goodness and purity of life are

necessary. The soul differs from the body's physical limbs and organs. There is no specific area of the body where it can be found. It penetrates both the mind and the body, and which enters the mind will not become distinct or known until it is clear. Seeing outside objects is one thing. Perceiving an entity that pervades and is concealed within our inner selves is a whole different process. Introspection by itself may enable us to analyse our minds. However, in order to see the soul, we must not only focus inward but also calm our minds and purge them of passion. Without detachment and purity, the medium is murky and what is, in a sense, hidden from view is invisible. It is not ignorance but desires and attachments that blind our vision. If this fact is understood, it will become clear why realising the soul within us requires leading a moral life and having a pure heart. Then, it will also be clear that the three paths—the road of enlightenment, the way of faith, and the way of good deeds—which are frequently mentioned as separate paths in orthodox Vedānta commentaries, are actually one and the same.

Therefore, to recognise the spirit that exists inside us apart from the body, the mind and senses must be appropriately brought under control. The effort to secure this is called by the oft-repeated but much-misunderstood term *Yoga*. If this stage is reached, we can 'see' the spirit that is inside of us. Vigilance is required to sustain the mental state attained via self-control and inner serenity. Like sunrise and sunset, the state of mind reached through *Yoga* appears and disappears, reappears and again disappears. Constant effort and unwavering alertness are essential for the path of yoga, otherwise, we lapse back, and the soul is lost in the body, and we take the one for the other as we did before.

DOCTRINE OF MĀYĀ

Rajagopalachari argued that "we had heard of the saying 'world is an illusion' by some Vedāntins. This does not mean that the world is not real. The world is real. All the teachers who taught about Māyā and God have lived their lives on the basis that the world is a reality" (Rajagopalachari, 2022). Ignoring the weak and hypocritical people who say one thing and do another, we can see that the great and virtuous Vedāntins who lived in the light of truth thought that this world, this life, and the rule of Karma were harsh truths. For example, Vivekananda discussed the concept of Māyā in his four lectures delivered in London in 1896 titled: "*Maya and Illusion, Maya and the Evolution of the Conception of God, Maya and Freedom, and The Absolute and Manifestation*" (Rolland, 2016). According to Vivekananda,

“Vedāntic Advaitism declares that Māyā cannot be defined as non-existence any more than that it can be defined as existence. It is an intermediate form between the equally absolute Being and non-Being” (Rolland, 2016).

Rajaji enquired about the doctrine that “when the Vedāntins said that all is Māyā, that everything is an illusion created by the lord, what does the teaching mean? When it is said that the lord is all, it means that he is the indwelling spirit that life lives. As the soul is to the body, so is the lord—the soul of all souls. Every movement of the individual soul is an activity of the lord. The lord is a reality and so are the souls that are permeated by him” (Rajagopalachari, 2022). The body is a reality, although the soul within the body gives its life. He further writes that “The doctrine of Māyā does not mean that everything is unreal and that we are free to act as we please. Life is real, and life is subject to eternal and unchangeable law. This and not unreality is the true implication of the Vedāntic doctrine” (Rajagopalachari, 2022).

Rajagopalachari further writes that “the soul which fills the body with life, and with the soul, the supreme soul which fills the individual soul and gives it its being, this according to Vedānta is the structure of life” (Rajagopalachari, 2017). Just as the soul gives the body its individuality, the ultimate being grants the soul the ability to act as a unique soul. In multiple births, the same soul inhabits multiple bodies. Despite the fact that the indweller, or *antarātman*, is one and the same, every soul has a unique identity and leads a life apart from others. This is called Māyā.

Our pleasures and sorrows, our distractions and desires, conceal the indwelling soul from our view. The *ātman* becomes altogether inaccessible to our intelligence. The spirit suffers no taint even though lying hidden amid a pile of contaminants. The turbid consciousness becomes clear if the mind is focused, the senses are subdued, and the heart is pulled away from outside objects. At that point, we start to perceive the soul as something actual and apart from the body in which it resides.

Rajagopalachari gave an example of sunlight and shadow to understand this concept easily. He writes, “Sunlight has no shape. It shines equally in all directions, i.e. similar to a supreme being. But shadows have shape. It is the obstruction to light that forms the shadow. The individual souls are the shadows that are caused in the path of the infinite light of the supreme being. As soon as the obstruction is removed, the shadow merges with the light. *Karma* causes the shadow, i.e. the separate being is the light. The shadow

takes shape as the individual soul. Although it is a fact that the light creates the shifting shadow, the shadow is as true as the light” (Rajagopalachari, 2017).

SALVATION

Rajaji writes, “*Moksha* or deliverance is the soul’s realisation of the supreme being. *Moksha* is not arriving in another world or place. When the mind is enlightened by the realisation that the soul and the indwelling Supreme soul are one, the shadow merges with the light. This is liberation” (Rajagopalachari, 2022). The term *Moksha* in Sanskrit means simply release. *Moksha* is a state of being. It is not a place, garden or world.

According to Advaita, "Liberation is the realisation of Brahman, which is infinite, real knowledge, ever-free, non-dual, and eternal bliss" (Balasubramanian and Revathy, 2012). The root cause of bondage is ignorance, which hides the true nature of Brahman-Ātman; liberation results from acquiring knowledge, which eliminates the underlying ignorance. A person who is fortunate enough to learn Brahmin knowledge from these scriptures will attain liberation from bondage. It is a well-known fact that when we lack information about something, we try to find out what we actually know about it. Consider the well-known situation where someone mistakenly believes a rope in front of them is a snake. Unaware of the true nature of the object before them, someone assumes it is a snake and starts to flee in fear. Only by learning about the object in front of him—a rope—can his ignorance be eliminated.

In order to clarify the relationship between the body, soul, and the supreme being, Rajagopalachari provided a few examples or techniques used by the great teachers. Here are a few examples: he writes, “The sun shines on the water. When the surface of the water breaks into ripples we see numerous little suns on the water. The individual souls are like the reflections of the sun in water. If there is no water, there will be no reflections. In the same way, the individual souls become one with the supreme on the removal of ignorance. To dispel ignorance and to obtain knowledge, we need purity, self-control and devotion” (Rajagopalachari, 2022). In other examples, he writes, “The soul is responsible for the body’s ability to function as a living being. It is the supreme being that endows the individual soul with its quality as a divine spark. Just as in this mortal life, body and soul can exist as one in happy combination, so also if the individual souls live in happy unity with

the supreme soul and without any imperfection, ignorance or distraction, it is *Moksha*” (Rajagopalachari, 2022).

Rajaji also looks at it another way. He writes that “The individual soul is only the shadow of the supreme universal soul. Ignorance is the cause of the shadow and of the impression that the shadow is different from the thing which produces it. This feeling of separation grows more and more through desire, attachment, anger and hatred. When the mind awakens, the two merge into one” (Rajagopalachari, 2022).

The enlightened soul is unified and absorbed in the supreme soul, similar to how all five senses merge and vanish in the soul during the night when we sleep. Various Vedāntic schools of thought, viz., Dvaita (Dualist), Advaita (Monist), and Visishtadvaita (Qualified Monist) philosophers, adopt several other forms of illustration. Though the method of illustration and teaching may differ, the Vedāntic life, which is the path of liberation advocated by all of them, is the same.

THE LAW OF KARMA

The body is a tool—a beautiful, magical tool—that, oddly, becomes inseparable from its master, the soul. Similarly, the soul is a tool for God, who resides within it and uses it for reasons we cannot understand or explain. The tool and the person who wields it are inextricably linked in this mystic relationship.

The doctrine of Karma taught in the Vedānta is that all things revolve in accordance with an unalterable law; it is incorrect to think of karma in terms of fatalism. The law of cause and effect is unchangeable; the effect is innate in the cause, like a tree in its seed; the cause carries the impact in its womb; every action has its designated effect. Vedānta teaches that destiny does not mean the surrender of effort or breakdown of faith in natural law. The unchangeable law of effect that follows prior causes is known as karma. This is how Vedānta and fatalism differ from one another. In the West, the pagan ideologies gave rise to fatalism.

When the follower of Vedānta says that “everything happens according to *karma*, it does not mean knowledge and human effort are vain and that human activity does not count. The word karma means work and in no ways refers to any mysterious pre-determination by an outer power” (Rajagopalachari, 2017). Rajaji quoted the words of Bharati (the national poet of the South) to explain the difference between the law of karma and fatalism, “yes, I agree it

is decreed. It is the decree of law that there is no happiness for the ignorant. It is the decree of law that if the law of health is neglected, disease must be endured” (Rajagopalachari, 2017).

Rajaji has also cited examples from the third chapter of Bhagvad-Gītā where Shri Krishna responds to Arjuna's questions rationally. Arjuna asked, “Why do men sin, knowing that sin is bad and not desiring to fall into it”? (Rajagopalachari, 2017). Rajaji writes that “The Divine teacher did not say that it was pre-determined by the karma of man’s previous births. But he said that the error in the person’s conduct results from the urge of desires, anger and hatred which wrap the person’s judgement and mislead him. The Divine teacher added that a person should put forth all his spiritual strength to fight and overcome these corrupting influences at the very start, and gave the assurance that the effort to resist will find success” (Rajagopalachari, 2017). This response is more rationalistic than even determinist scientific philosophers would provide.

The law of karma states that man evolves precisely in accordance with his deeds, and that death and transitioning to the next life do not alter this process. This is the most significant idea in Hindu philosophy, and it applies the rule of conservation of energy to the moral realm. Rajaji writes that “whether a man frees himself from the fruits of his past deeds or adds more links to the chains that bind him depends upon the way he lives. Past deeds or their effects hold one in their grip from birth, but the soul has freedom to act, and in the exercise of that freedom, it has the power to overcome tendencies and to strive for liberation. The process and effort can be extended over many births. We make for ourselves our opportunities, and the process goes on ceaselessly for better or worse and is carried on from birth to birth. The battle is as long as eternity, and the tedium is relieved by the lapse of memory with each death” (Rajagopalachari, 2017).

THE ETHICS OF VEDĀNTA

Rajaji writes that “if one understands the relation between the individual *ātman* and the supreme soul, thereafter the feeling of separation between one living being and other fades away” (Rajagopalachari, 2022). Achieving freedom from this sense of separation is not a process of knowledge, a gathering of information, but a change of state, something like waking from sleep. Therefore, the Upaniṣads promulgate “Arise! Awake! Arise!” Thus, realising that we all possess the ultimate soul is like rising from slumber. It is simple to wake up from sleep. However, waking up from the deep slumber

of worldly existence is not a simple task. It can be possible by changing our mental disposition entirely with the following steps: Firstly, the desire to wake up must surge in the heart. Secondly, to avoid reverting to the realm of distinctions, one must maintain constant attention to the mind. The external and internal senses must be controlled, and perpetual vigilance over one's mind is necessary, such that we do not slip back into the world of distinction.

The need for ethical principles is more necessary than before in contemporary times as we are becoming enslaved to our selfish motives and desires. Consequently, the focus has shifted from inward self to outward material happiness only. We seek temporary pleasure and do many things to obtain it due to ignorance. Anger, wrath, and grief are the results of not finding the pleasures we want or of temporarily obtaining them and then losing them. This intensifies our original ignorance of Egoism, the sense of "I", the possessive feelings of 'mine', the acquisitive need of 'for me', and the passion that results from this continuously increasing intensity are all made worse by this. As a result, we are flung farther and farther from reality. Purity and humility are essential to desist this egoism. We should sincerely bend our attention to the contemplation of the unity of life and foster the belief that the supreme soul is both within and around us.

Rajaji further writes, "The Gītā expands and explains the ethics of Vedānta. It emphasises that the activities of the world must go on. We should act so that the world can improve in the coming generations. Like good people who plant trees for their children and children's children, we should work to improve humanity by improving ourselves for future births, even though there may be no continuity of memory and identity of personality" (Rajagopalachari, 2017). If we don't, the world won't get better and better, which is what we should all aim for. The good man should complete every work related to his position in society. He keeps an internal spirit of detachment while doing things like others. He acts without self-interest in anything he does. He keeps his composure or maintains equilibrium of mind when faced with joy and sadness, pleasure and agony, and success and failure. It has been called '*Stithprajna*' in the Bhagvadgītā. The good man is qualified for further progress by meditation and prayer. *Yoga* consists in thus living a dedicated life amid worldly affairs. Work should be done in a spirit of duty, and results should not be permitted to agitate the mind. This unselfish and detached attitude can and should be cultivated even when we are actively involved in the events of daily life. Continual practice of this attitude is the essence of Vedāntic life.

Rajagopalachari further quoted a paragraph from the beginning of the *Isavasya Upanishads*:

“Everything in the Universe abides in the supreme being realizing this, dedicate everything you do to that being. Cast off the desires that arise in the heart, the thought of possessing what is enjoyed by another. Joy comes by such renunciation of desire. Do your duties and go through the allotted span of life. In detachment lies the way for man to keep his soul uncontaminated, not otherwise” (Rajagopalachari, 2017).

Rajaji summarised the teaching of Gītā as he writes, “Vedāntin performs fully, carefully and conscientiously but without attachment, all duties devolving upon him as a result of birth or of events and circumstances, or arising out of the place he occupies in society. There is in truth no superiority or inferiority in the various duties allotted to individuals or groups in any social order, all being equally necessary of performance for the maintenance and welfare of society” (Rajagopalachari, 2022). They should all be performed in the spirit of unselfish cooperation, which ennobles and equalises all tasks. He lives a pure life, controlling his senses and managing his work, food, rest, play, and sleep.

Rajaji raises questions about “how can Vedānta produce any enthusiasm to be told that something will be fruitful in a future birth” (Rajagopalachari, 2022). He writes that “With the death, memories of this life end and also the teaching of Vedānta. But there is hunger in the soul that self-seeking and momentary pleasure cannot satisfy. The joy of right conduct is inherent in human nature. This stand can be confirmed by the inner feeling of every one of us, and by experience as well as all history, recorded and unrecorded” (Rajagopalachari, 2022). Although we don't know who will appreciate the wayside trees' shade, we nonetheless plant them in hopes that future generations of mankind will. Every such task brings us joy. The law of cause and effect, which extends to subsequent births, states that if we lead a Vedāntic life, evils will not proliferate, and the souls that will dwell in the future world will gradually advance to a higher stage.

Therefore, the objective of right living is twofold: one's own satisfaction and one's contribution to a better world. Vedānta's appeal stems from its emphasis on accountability for the future world. Social and civic cooperation permanently benefits the town or village where one is a citizen. Patriotism benefits the future generations of the country to which we belong. Vedānta is to ensure the well-being of the future world, which is currently being created.

If we live detached and dedicate our lives, society will be populated by better human beings.

VEDĀNTA AND THE NEW ORDER

Rajagopalachari has also analysed the concept of ‘Vedānta’ concerning the ‘The New Order’. Truth being one and indivisible, the prevailing contradiction in science, religion and politics is bound to harm social well-being. Science, Religion and Politics are very fundamental for any human being and country, and the development of any country will depend on better functioning in these three fields. Disharmony in fundamentals leads to doubt, pain, hypocrisy and frustration. The philosophy we hold, the laws of nature we are aware of, and the statecraft we employ should all be made to align and complement one another. He further states that “if we have real belief in truth and something of the courage and adventures of the earlier builder of human civilisation, we need not despair of achieving this” (Rajagopalachari, 2022).

In the olden days, there was not so much contradiction. One element that lessened the paradox was science's backwardness. Rather than causing conflict, men's fervent devotion to religion and philosophy helped them achieve enormous success. They were able to do this because they made no effort to hold opposing views. Today, science has expanded and gained acceptance on a far larger scale than in the past. The maladjustment is now more severe as a result. Regarding the conflict between religion and politics, the differences are much more pronounced than those between science and religion. Any philosophy or religion that deviates from contemporary science is inevitably false and hypocritical. Any misalignment between science and religion or between religion and statecraft must be fixed in order to develop a cohesive system of thought and emotion if we hope to ensure a solid foundation for human progress.

As old as civilisation itself, there is a religious philosophy in India that is remarkably consistent with science, despite how weird the claim may appear to outsiders. A code of ethics that can serve as a solid spiritual foundation for a fair social and economic structure has developed from that religious philosophy. Amazingly, Hinduism foresaw the evolutionary theory and the rule of law as men of science understand it. The Vedānta's God is not an anthropomorphic creation of human fancy. Divine Sovereignty is explained in the Gītā in language which anticipates and meets the difficulties that modern science raises against religious cosmology. The sovereignty of God

is exercised in and through the unchangeable law of cause and effect, through the laws of nature in all spheres. As Gītā says:

“All things abide in Me, yet behold the wonder, I stand apart and Nature works by herself. *Prakriti* brings forth the moving and unmoving without my interference”. (Gītā, IX: 4-10)

Rajaji writes, “A study of Upaniṣads will show that Vedānta has anticipated science by postulating that the universe has developed by a gradual unfolding of the power lodged within the primordial substance. In fact, the philosophy of Hinduism is nearer to the evolutionary and atomic theories of natural science and physics than the doctrines of any other religion” (Rajagopalachari, 2017). The Upaniṣads' emphasis on adherence to truth and unrelenting inquiry is its defining feature and what sets scientific research apart.

A planned Cooperative economy, in place of profit-motive and the so-called civil liberties of private competition, cannot rely solely even on the strongest external authority. We need a culture and a widely recognised code of spiritual values which work as a law from within. Without such spiritual control, mere material planning must need to culminate in widespread corruption and fraud. Vedānta and the ethic which follows from it and which is expanded and fully set out in the Bhagavad Gītā, are pre-eminently fitted to serve as the spiritual basis for planned cooperative community life, wherein each person must work to the best of their ability and receive what they need.

The Bhagavad Gītā teaches us to live our lives with the community's well-being as our sole concern and without regard for our own financial gain. It emphasized the equal dignity and sacredness of all labour. Indeed, the socialist philosophy in terms of religion is laid down uniquely in the Gītā. According to the Gītā, fulfilling one's assigned work is the fullest expression of worshipping God.

CONCLUSION

Rajaji was a rare combination of a saint and a shrewd man of the world. He was both “a man of thought and a man of action, an idealist as well as a pragmatist, an intellectual as well as a warm-hearted humanist” (Jatti, 1993). It has been accurately stated that few have surpassed his accomplishments in a wide range of fields, including politics, government, social service, religion, philosophy, and literature. His prudence stemmed from a “cultured” interaction with popular Hinduism, which sets it apart from others. For him, “Culture was about avoiding meanness, dishonesty and harshness; it was

about being large-hearted and considering the feelings of others” (Srinivasan, 2014). These are the values that should be possessed by any leader for developmental politics.

Undoubtedly, Vedānta is a part of our people's conceptual framework and a living philosophy of existence in India. Indians learn it from tradition rather than from studying books. Even though the Indian people may have been greatly impacted by foreign cultures and new aspirations, this spiritual nutrient has not dried up or decayed. Rajaji warns that we cannot rely solely on police officers and spies to protect the people if we want society to exert control over individual lives to achieve the above-discussed outcome. He has a firm belief that “Vedānta as conceived and developed in ancient India is faith particularly suitable for modern times” (Rajagopalachari, 1993). He further writes that we must develop a spiritual life that makes fulfilling our responsibilities enjoyable and functions as an internal law, which makes it simple to carry out laws imposed by the state. The teachings of the Vedānta, which have their roots in India's ancient traditions, can provide the cultural and spiritual foundation for a new and equitable way of living.

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