

## THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE NEW INDIAN RENAISSANCE

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### 1. Introduction

In the history of every nation there comes a time when radical changes in its socio-economic-political order becomes necessary for that nation to survive as a living force (Dr.S.Radhakrishnan). India today is faced with such a critical moment in its history. Urgent and radical changes are required to revitalise this great nation. My prayerful effort here will be to share the integral vision and ideology of the New Indian Renaissance, with special emphasis on its political philosophy. I shall also share here something about the movement for enlightened politics that has become an imperative for the country.

### 2. New Indian Renaissance

By the term 'New Indian Renaissance' we mean a spiritual and moral renaissance of the whole Indian subcontinent based on an integral vision of life and reality and an ecological holistic worldview in harmony with the discoveries of science and the perennial wisdom of world religions. It is promoted through the Pratyasa Movement, which was born at Hyderabad on 18 January, 1986. The Pratyasa Movement is a socio-spiritual movement for New Indian Renaissance.

The first renaissance movement in India began with Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahma Samaj. It was the result of an interaction between

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Hinduism and Christianity. In more concrete terms, the first Indian Renaissance movement was born as a result of the influence of western thought and the philosophy of the Hindu mind. It was centered on the revitalisation of Hindu religion.

But the New Indian Renaissance promoted by the Pratyasa Movement is not confined to any religion or region. It is an inter-religious movement based on the perennial wisdom of world religions and discoveries of science. It upholds the principle of 'unity in diversity' that is the central theme of India's cultural and spiritual traditions. It is rooted in an integral spirituality based on in integral *sadhana*, *Sahana Yoga*.

The aim of the Pratyasa Movement is to transform India into a Bharatiya Dharma Rajya, built on the strong foundation of Bharatiya, and Bharatiya Dharma, which are the concepts based in an integral vision of reality and ecological worldview that lie at the root of Indian thought. The concepts of 'Hindutva', 'Hindu Rashtra', or 'Secular India' promoted by the 'Sangh Parivar' and 'Left secular' parties cannot accommodate an all-inclusive vision which is the imperative of the era for India's revitalisation and reconstruction. A broader framework which can accept and accommodate all religions, parties and groups in India is needed to hold the nation together as a united and dynamic entity. This is what we are trying to achieve through the Pratyasa Movement. Bharatiya, Bharatiya Dhrama and Bharatiya Dharma Rajya are broader concepts that can provide a mega-framework on which a future greater India can be built.

Renaissance implies an intellectual awakening. An integral school of thought is needed for the New Indian Renaissance. The social, economic, political and religious dimensions of life can no more be seen as separated from each other, they are integral parts of our collective existence, our communitarian nature.

### **3. An Integral School of Thought**

Science without religion is lame. Religion without science is blind (Dr. Albert Einstein). Mystics understand the roots of Tao but not its

branches; scientists understand its branches but not its roots. Science does not need mysticism and mysticism does not need science; but man needs both (Fritjof Capra). One of the greatest needs of humanity today is to transcend the cultural limitations of great religions and to find a wisdom, a philosophy, which can reconcile their differences and reveal the unity which underlines all their diversities (Bede Griffiths).

From atom to molecule to cell to organism, nature evolves into higher forms of being, integrating the lower in the higher in this evolutionary process. This is the law of creation which also holds good in the evolution of human consciousness. Human beings and human consciousness are ever growing and evolving to higher forms of integration.

There was perhaps a time when science and religion were opposed to one each other. But today they are in a process of integration. They are like two sides of a coin, like the two wings of a bird. We are becoming more and more conscious about our inter dependent organic nature. An earth-family consciousness is emerging for humanity. A new paradigm and a new mind set are needed today. We have to learn to see all in one and one in all. Our life must become integral, our thought much more integral.

Science and religion, philosophy and mysticism, religion and politics need to be seen as integrally related. Only integrated minds can have such an integral vision and promote such an integral thought and philosophy. A spiritual basis is an imperative for an integral school of thought because spirituality is the integrating factor in our thought and life, in our ideology and action.

The Pratyasa Movement presents and promotes an integral school of thought which is termed as *Dharmodaya* which is a school of thought based on a synthesis of science and religion and on a 'earth-family' consciousness. The *Dharmodaya* integral school of thought includes social, economic, political and religious thoughts held together by an integral vision of life and reality and an ecological holistic worldview.

#### 4. Political Philosophy of the New Indian Renaissance

The school of thought that provides the ideological basis to the New Indian Renaissance is termed *Dharmodaya* which synthesises in itself the two unique contributions of India to human thought: the concepts of *dharma* and *sarvodaya*. *Dharmodaya* is an integral school of thought comprising four streams of thought that together encompasses the social, economic, political and religious dimensions of life. All these dimensions are interdependent and interrelated. An integral of life and reality and an ecologically holistic worldview provide the common basis to them in *Dharmodaya*: they constitute the foundations of *Dharmodaya*.

'Politics' in *Dharmodaya* is understood as the science of distributive justice. It has to do with sharing of power and resources. The four fundamental principles of justice within the *Dharmodaya* political philosophy are:

1. Justice delayed is justice denied.
2. Justice displaced is justice misplaced.
3. Certainty of punishment is a better deterrent to crimes than severity of punishment.
4. Equality before the law.

In order to mete out justice effectively, efficiently, impartially and locally, the governmental, administrative and judicial agencies and institutions need to be decentralised and localised. A decentralised federal democracy built on a strong foundation of local self-government is what is advocated here. Gandhiji envisaged the 'Panchyat Raj' model for the Indian polity. But his Panchyat Raj is very different from the 'Panchayat Raj' that is being promoted today.

E.F. Schumacher had advocated a decentralised political and administrative model for India wherein every district is envisioned to be an autonomous political and administrative body with its own judiciary and university. In fact this model is the best suited model for India. This will solve a great many of our problems that have their roots in demands for

more autonomy and justice. Smaller states and regional parties are becoming an imperative of the era. The year 1996 marks a new phase in Indian politics. For the first time in Indian history we have a coalition government at the centre. Our democracy is becoming more decentralised and people-oriented. Political parties and leaders are increasingly coming under public scrutiny. But there is also a danger of caste-communal-regional forces getting an upper hand at the cost of larger national interests.

'Decentralisation', 'social justice', 'federalism' and 'transparent leadership', which are the four cornerstones of a mature democracy, are becoming popular concepts in Indian politics today. These are encouraging signs. But the fact that the U.P. Assembly election this time was fought entirely on a caste-communal plank is a dangerous one. The Hindutva and Hindu Rashtra concepts of the Sangh Parivar are also retrogressive forces that will lead to conflicts and much violence. What is needed today is an all-inclusive vision of future India wherein Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, Jews, Buddhists, as well as those who do not belong to any religion, all have a place and role. Without such a larger vision India cannot grow and blossom to her destined greatness as an agent of unity and peace in the world.

The vision of future India presented by the Pratyasa Movement and more especially by the political thought within its integral school of thought, is termed *Bharatiya Dharma Rajya* which is a Bharat built on the larger concepts of *Bharatiya* and *Bharatiya Dharma* which are rooted in the universal vision and the inclusive nature of Indian thought and culture. The concepts of Hindutva and Hindu Rashtra have no roots in India's cultural and spiritual traditions. They are alien concepts promoted by vested interests with narrow political motives. These forces have gathered much strength and have become very powerful because the intellectuals and philosophers in India have not been alive to their responsibility of providing an integral ideology and vision to the nation. They have left these most important responsibilities to politicians and governments and we are suffering much.

## **5. A Movement for Enlightened Politics: An Urgent Need**

'Enlightened politics' implies politics based on an integral vision of life and reality and an ecological holistic worldview. Decentralisation, federalism, social justice and transparent leadership are its four corner stones. The principle of 'unity in diversity' is its central theme. Science and religion together provide a strong foundation to enlightened politics.

The Indian National Congress was born from the first renaissance movement in the country. It embodied the political aspirations of the people for a 'Sovereign Democratic Republic' and led a national movement to achieve that goal. The first freedom struggle succeeded to realise its goal under the enlightened leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and because of the selfless and fearless struggle put up by millions of Indians. Politics and religion were for Gandhi two sides of his quest for Truth. He proved their interdependent and interrelated nature. He ridiculed those who tried to separate religion from politics and stressed the fact that such people do not know what either religion or politics means. He had an integral vision of reality and he led an integral life. His was an integral personality. Only integrated people can see the integral nature of life and reality. The light of God shines through an integrated person. Only when the body, soul and spirit are integrated can the Spirit of God take control of our lives. Only then His Light can enlighten us.

Enlightened politics also means a political spirituality that enables the Light of God shining upon His servants to enlighten the collective life of a people, to guide them in the path of truth. It is the type of spirituality that is needed to realise the truth of our national motto -*Satyameva Jayate*.

Enlightened politics should lead to a national movement for value-based politics and decentralised federalism. This will be the 'second freedom struggle' for India. A political agency embodying the federal democratic structure in itself has to emerge to lead such a national movement which is the crying need of the hour for India's survival as a living force and dynamic democracy. Disciples of Christ in India who are prepared to share the Cross of their Master are called to be 'salt of the earth

and the light of the world' in this historic adventure, in this our *Yuga Dharma*.

## 6. Conclusion

I have shared an outline of the New Indian Renaissance especially its integral school of thought and the political philosophy within it. With corruption spreading like cancer in all walks of our life and at all levels of Indian politics we need to launch a national movement for value-based politics and decentralised federalism if we are to save the country from self-destruction. This is our duty to God and fellow beings today. This is our *swadharma* as well as *yuga dharma* today. We have to provide the intellectual impetus to this historic task facing India today by promoting an integral vision and philosophy. An integral ideological basis for enlightened politics in India is an urgent need. This is where we can make profound contributions.