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HOLISTIC VIEW

Resurgence is not exactly a magazine of ecology or of decentralisation or of the peace movement. although all of these ideas are very strongly represented in its pages. The problems of our society are caused by narrow, specialist analysis. Marxists see the solution in the removal of economic injustice, anarchists advocate the dissolution of the power of the state, educationists propose the radicalisation of teaching and learning and enlightened scientists urge radical technology. While some people attach greater importance to the rational, intellectual, scientific way to experience and reality, others take the path of feeling, emotion, belief and mysticism. These approaches are all valid and necessary, but none of them is complete in itself.

There were six blind people. They heard that the king was visiting the next village on an elephant, so they went to find out what kind of animal this was. One of them took hold of the elephant's trunk, another the tusk, the third held an ear, the fourth felt a leg, the fifth the stomach and the sixth the tail. And then they went home. Being very sure of their sense of touch and their knowledge, they started to describe their experience to the other villagers. "O what a wonderful elephant - it is so slim and supple, long and strong," said the one who had felt the trunk. "No. It is hard and short and stiff," said the one who had felt the tusk. "You are both wrong. The elephant is flat and thin like a large leaf," said the one who had felt the ear. "That's not true. It is strong and rounded like a pillar," said the one who had felt the leg. And they went on arguing until someone who had seen the elephant said, "All of you are right. All the parts together are the elephant."

All things - the individual, the human society, the natural world and the cosmos - are interrelated. Unless we can live life in a holistic way, we will find only partial solutions. Thus the interrelatedness of all things is the subject matter of Resurgence. We try to see life and society in all of its aspects, embracing all branches of knowledge, of experience, of awareness - spiritual and secular.

If we wish to relate to that interrelatedness, our realm of activity needs to be small. Unless the units of organisation, political, economic or whatever, are of appropriate size, life becomes impersonal, mechanical and sterile.

Therefore, Resurgence supports the independence movements

of small nations, societies based on ethnic and tribal identity with their own languages, customs, culture and religion. Large centralised governments have created a cultural wilderness and an uprooted, lonely people.

But the journey to decentralisation does not end with the breakdown of nations: it continues in the drive to self-sufficiency of regions, villages and communities. The principle of self-sufficiency is also within ourselves. A fulfilled existence consists of the proper use of all faculties, and not in the creation of a retarded society where some are paid to think and others to do work with their hands. Self-sufficiency should not be confused with isolationism. It is built on mutual co-operation and a close relationship between people and nature. Self-sufficiency and economic and political decentralisation are two sides of the same coin.

Only a decentralised society is conducive to ecological balance, just distribution of wealth and the protection and preservation of cultural heritage.

All the great visionaries have come to the same conclusion about the basic size for the unit of administration and control. Lenin visualised the small units of soviets and called for power to the soviets; Mao Tse Tung has put great emphasis on the village communes; Mahatma Gandhi believed in village republics; the Christians organised their activities within a parish council.

Traditionally, the most important unit of human activity has been the village. In pre-industrial agrarian societies the village was the universe in miniature. The arts, the crafts, agriculture, industry, administration and other activities flourished there. Often (especially in Africa and Asia) there was no private ownership of land. Where there were towns there was a proper balance between town and village. Almost all the members could participate directly and effectively in the affairs and government of the village. Since it was possible to exercise control through personal contact, there was very little need of bureaucracy: rules could be changed according to requirements, decisions made according to necessity. The city state and the tribe were also examples of small and self-sufficient government.

The vision of Resurgence is of people who are largely self-sufficient, self-reliant and able to control their own destiny - a small society with a holistic view of life. Ω

Satish Kumar