

**REPRESENTATION OF NEO HUMANISM TO THE UPLIFTMENT OF HUMANITY
IN THE SOCIETY**

Mani N Bacchu

Research Scholar

Acharya Nagarjuna University

Guntur, India

Abstract

Neohumanism is a philosophy and attitude of life-based on universal love that helps us transcend narrow sentiments and embrace all animate and inanimate forms of life as varied manifestations of Divine Spirit. Neo humanistic education is an appropriate tool to transform from the human-centric attitude to universal outlook. It develops devotional love among humans that extends to all animate and inanimate beings. They must constantly cultivate their own inner selves and therefore invite a co-learning, co-creating process with the students. Teachers have the power to transform the students by their own example and loving guidance; to nurture the highest aspirations of humanity.

Key Words: Neohumanism, philosophy, humanity and creative learning.

Introduction

Neohumanist Education encourages students to develop an awareness of social problems and equips them with the practical skills to solve them. They are thus inspired to work for social justice and for the upliftment of the neglected all over the world. A curriculum that liberates the intellect from dogmas and subtle forms of psychic exploitation instills in the students the conviction that change is possible and offers them the tools to create that change.

As a global society, we stand at the threshold of a new era of cooperation made urgent by impending economic and environmental meltdowns that leaves us no alternative but to find a

common ground to survive and possibly thrive. Who then will answer the call to refine the definition of universal morality and persuade the masses to adopt this benevolent and universal morality? Sarkar's Neohumanist philosophy and education along with his Progressive Utilization Theory offer a synthesis of spiritually based morality and a path towards social equality. Yama and Niyama represent a movement of morality that is the bedrock of spiritual progress.

At the center of Yama and Niyama is "Awakened Conscience" which answers the call for a discriminating intuition based on rationality, study, and spiritual mentality. This code of morality transcends emotionally based sentiments such as geo-sentiments, socio-sentiments, and human sentiments; establishing devotional sentiment towards all animate and inanimate beings. Awakened Conscience is acquired through "study" which seeks consensus to overcome confirmation biases in arriving at choices that serve social equality and mutual altruism beyond tit for tat – true coordinated cooperation.

PROUT (the Progressive Utilization Theory), has put forward an expanded conception of humanism termed Neohumanism. While Neohumanism is new as a philosophical concept, it is based on an awareness that is perennial in nature — an awareness of the interwoven and interdependent nature of life. Many tribal societies have held this awareness, feeling a kinship with all beings within a complex web of creation. This awareness has been given new form and meaning by ecological science, which recognizes that interconnectedness is a fundamental reality of life, and by earth-based spirituality, which has revived a sense of the sacredness of nature. If we are to fully accept that there is an interrelationship between all life, that no living being is independent of the common web of existence, then narrow identification with group interests, or even with the privileged interests of the human species, becomes untenable. Instead, a universal outlook is called for.

PROUT has not advocated limiting growth, and has not attempted to define what constitutes sustainable development as such, but instead puts emphasis on establishing balance, on seeking the dynamic equilibrium of social processes. This equilibrium applies not only to economic activity but is a comprehensive balance, affecting all spheres of life in an integrated manner. So neither material, nor psychic, nor spiritual spheres of life are given pride of place; all three spheres are developed in a balanced way, then all three are balanced together as a whole.

The concept of balance deeply reflects ecological processes, as it mirrors in the human society the dynamic balancing of biological processes that occur in the natural world. Human society is not separate from nature but is an extension or a part of it. Human society will function

best when upholding nature's principles that require maintaining dynamic equilibrium in all spheres of human expression. The concept of balance also takes into account that human society, while not separate from broader natural processes, does have its uniqueness, as human nature includes the potential for spiritual expression. And it is our spiritual urge that best provides a context for measuring social progress. This is to say, social progress should not be defined as the mere increase in material abundance, but as the collective movement toward material and psychological conditions that provide a congenial environment for spiritual development.

The existential value of all life must be recognized. One's identification, at some primal level, must come to be with the welfare of the whole of humanity and with the well-being of the whole of planetary life. To hold the view that one group — whether a class, a caste, a nationality, a tribe, a religion or an ethnic community — is endowed with special rights, privileges, or status is to lose sight of the fact that the destiny of all is inalienably linked together. Not only must we identify with all humanity, but also recognize that humanity shares its fate with the other living beings of the earth. So Neohumanism is humanism which is not limited to valuing the welfare of human beings, but values as well the existence of all beings.

Realization of the inherent oneness of existence is most deeply felt through spiritual experience. In the attainment of spiritual transcendence, one feels a mystical union with the Divine, with the Sacred, with the whole. So while Neohumanism may be supported by intellectual paradigms put forth by contemporary science, grounding in a Neohumanistic outlook comes most immediately from spiritual experience. And spiritual experience arises out of our fundamental human nature. Spirituality may be described differently in different times, cultures, and philosophies, but there is a commonality of spiritual experience inherent in our human nature: in our unique human capacity for self-reflection. This self-reflective capacity, if cultivated, leads us toward knowledge of self, toward awareness of our cosmic identity.

This is the essence of the spiritual quest, and it leads eventually to overcoming the illusion of separateness, of alienation from the whole, enabling us to see the Divine expressed within us and within all beings.

So the philosophical outlook of Neohumanism requires no deep intellectual buttressing, no subtle abstractions of philosophy. It requires only the natural expression of our deepest human longing, our longing to know the self and experience the divine consciousness that lies associated with the self and through which we have a kinship with all living beings.

Neohumanism — a new formulation of humanism expanded to include all living beings and based on perennial spirituality — has important significance for the present humanity. Our global society is fragmented by divisiveness and exploited by powerful interests that prey on the life force of the common people. Further, mother earth and her living beings are being plundered and destroyed with little regard for the disruptive consequences, nor for the pain experienced by those without a voice. Neohumanism provides a value base for a new social reality, one in which there can be universal human dignity and in which the natural world can regain its balance and its full bounty of life.

Human existence is an ideological flow. It is a movement from crudity to subtlety, from imperfection towards perfection, from limited to unlimited, from unit to cosmic, from humanity to divinity. An endeavor to control our instinctual tendencies and goad our mental faculties through reason, intellect, and intuition towards universal welfare is the path of divinity. In this long spiritual journey from physical to spiritual, materialism to divinity, finite to infinite, we may encounter many challenges or difficult choices that are called moral dilemmas. Moral dilemmas abound in our personal and collective social lives, irrespective of our area of work or profession. All of us, as parents, businesswomen, community leaders or whatever roles we are in, are faced with common daily decisions that have some moral component. Should I do it or shouldn't I? Should I lie or tell the truth? Should I act now or wait? Should I support or oppose? We all face such questions in our minds. Some of our conscious choices affect just our near ones or the individual while others may affect a million others. The gravity of a moral decision varies with the nature of the impact of the decision and where we stand on the evolutionary ladder. For a cat, to catch a mouse is an instinctual behavior and not a moral choice, but for a human, to raise and kill animals for meat may involve a moral choice. In these days of epidemic viruses and ecological disasters, the invisible link and interconnectedness of all life are becoming more and more obvious.

The societies that reach the stage of degeneration typically fall into collapse, this fate is not inevitable. A reversal of the loss of balance is possible. However, it is not an easy task to restore balance to a society which has degenerated. First of all, there must be the development of a social structure in which human beings may once again gain their dignity and their integrity. To develop this, there must be a spiritual base established and then there must be the education of the masses, particularly the youth. One thing that must be emphasized is inspiring the people. People cannot be forced to change; they cannot be dealt with in a totalitarian manner; they cannot be pushed about. Even if the intent is good, it will ultimately lead to failure and will not progress the human society. For progress, there must be a different approach — an approach

which emphasizes the development of the people. Give the people inspiration, give them hope, and give them vitality. Inspire them to come up. Bring out their innate nature. Do not order them about and make rules and insist; this approach will not bring a new society.

The road from degeneration back to balance must be one of inspiration so that the spirit of the people is renewed and they are restored to their original state, to their fundamental nature, and are given scope to express this in the society. This is not done through political movements, nor is it done through totalitarian rule. If through revolutionary struggle control of the government is gained and the people are forced to change, it will be a failure. It must be done through inspiration; the people must be inspired. Give them back their hope, their dignity, their humanity. Educate the people. These are the forces that change society. Only when the people have come up can the social order be changed. And with a changed social order will naturally bring the change in the governing body.

The process of restoration of balance is not done through political rule; the rather corrupt political rule is purified through the restoration of balance. This must be remembered or else a faulty strategy may be undertaken which will lead to failure. To be successful, the appeal must be made to the hearts and minds of people. Give them back their dignity, give them back their autonomy and give them hope. Give them a way to know themselves, to know the greatness that is in them and to express it in the world. When the restoration of people's connection to dharma happens collectively, the balance will automatically be restored and corrupt and oppressive political systems will certainly collapse. For spiritually vital people cannot be oppressed, cannot be bought. They will dynamically work to change society because their spirits are alive. And when there are a collective awakening, defective social and political systems will certainly be forced to change. So when establishing balance in a society there must be a step by step methodical approach which renews vitality, restores hope, and gives the human being the right and the means to know and express the divinity within them. To inspire people and give them spiritual access to their divine nature is the method.

To create such a unified society and universal outlook among human beings; there must be an integration of certain fundamental values within the society at large so that there is a base - abroad universal base, for the development of a cooperative, integrative human alliance. As per the analysis of the present social and natural conditions, there is only one base that is sufficiently large to integrate all of the different cultural, social, political, and economic groupings within the human experience, and that is the sentiment of *universalism*. When individuals adopt as their

primary group identity the universal life force which expresses in all beings they can then find a base which is sufficiently expansive to integrate all the different groups and types of living beings. With this as a base, a society can be developed which is for the welfare of all beings – not only human beings but all beings, because human life cannot be separated from that of other living beings of the creation.

It is not the point of a universal society to make all people drones with the same culture, the same opinions, and the same lifestyles. The point is to find a common outlook based on a sentiment of universalism and in certain cardinal values that support human development in a universal fashion. This fundamental base becomes a platform from which all of the diverse groupings of human beings may lodge themselves within their own cultural context and geographical situation to live up to their maximum potentiality and live in a harmonious fashion with their natural environment. So the concept of a universal base for the human society does not oppress individuality by requiring uniformity. Rather it is an appreciation of the diversity of human experience within the context of a broad, universal base.

Conclusion

Finally, towards these ends, we need to bridge the widening knowledge gap among people of all countries and continue to “strive for excellence” in order to hasten the creation of a world of abundance for all species; foster greater understanding and harmony among all beings; and ensure justice, freedom and peace for all.

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