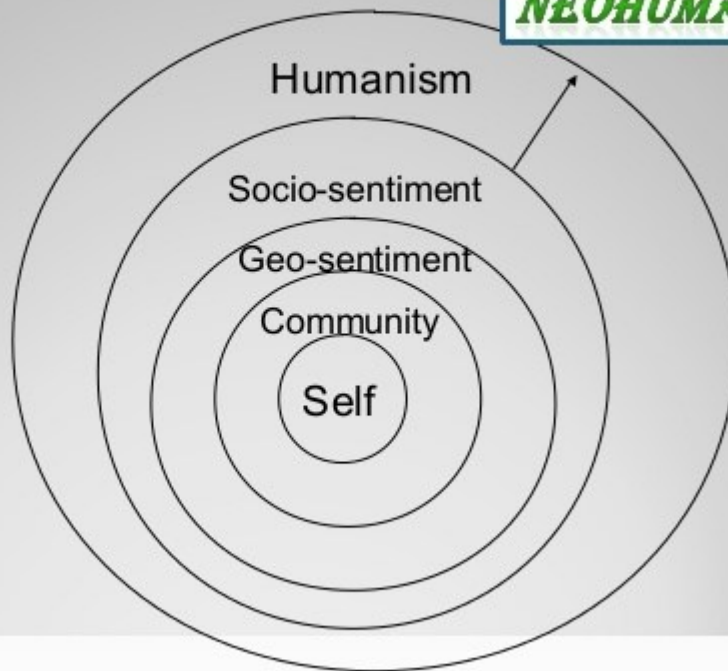


Expanding Sentiments

NEOHUMANISM

Sentiment:
emotional
tendency to
identify with
things we
like - whatever
gives us
pleasure.

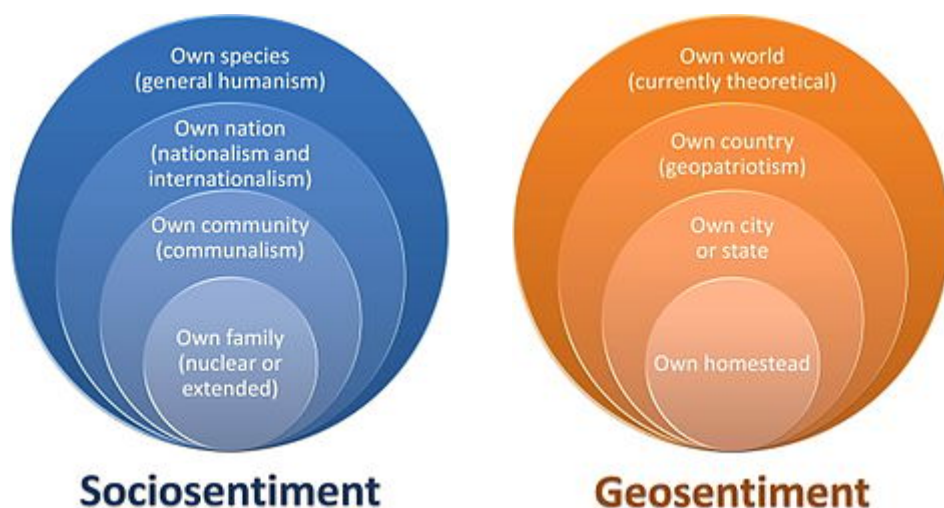


Awakened Conscience by Shrii P.R. Sarkar

The bondages that human beings are likely to suffer from are not purely physical – they are psychic and spiritual as well. The fundamental cause behind physical bondage lies in the psychic realm. The tortures, the exploitations, of human by human are no doubt physical phenomena, but these events have their source in the human mind: the pains and agonies experienced by those afflicted persons are more psychic than physical. Thus ultimately, the root of bondage is in the mind. Mind is independent from matter, but not altogether dissociated from it; it has some direct association with matter.

Food, clothes, education, medical treatment – these are the material needs of human beings. The world of the five fundamental factors is no doubt material, but it is not purely

physical or psychic; it also touches the fringes of the spiritual world. For example, psychic diseases may create such an unhealthy situation that the spiritual atmosphere may be badly affected. Take, for instance, those for whom religion is the stock-in-trade. They may do many things that may seriously jeopardize the entire spiritual world. Because of their anti-spiritual misdeeds the affected people might become apathetic to spirituality. Thus the disease, though fundamentally psychic, has some direct relevance to the material world and also to the spiritual world. The demoniacal human beings of this type are not only depriving their fellow humans of their physical wealth, or deceiving them in the psychic sphere, they are also depriving them of their precious spiritual treasure.



Just consider for a moment what enormous refuse these people are bearing with them. These people with defective mentality, who are wallowing in geo-sentiment, socio-sentiment, or ordinary humanistic sentiment, have not done any good to society, nor can they do so in future. They do not have any such capacity. A strong determination must be taken to rectify them. And when you take such a determination to rectify them and act accordingly, you will notice that those who refuse to be rectified will be destroyed – they will be completely annihilated.

Such people attempt to cover their harmful or defective sentiments under a veil of hypocrisy. This concealing

mentality is one aspect of hypocrisy. Consider, for instance, the case of vocal revolutionaries. They talk glibly of revolution outwardly, but in their heart of hearts, they want to avoid revolution. They say one thing openly, but they do just the opposite in practical life. It is very hard to identify such gilded human chameleons. At least the reactionary forces can be easily identified: they are openly antagonistic to anything which they do not like. They say directly, "We won't allow this to happen. We won't grant liberty to the people. We won't provide them with full-stomach meals. We will keep them languishing in poverty... or else where shall we find menials for our domestic chores?" However, it requires some knowledge of human behavior to identify those people who are difficult to detect.

Study

I said that there are two ways to fight against those people who are motivated, knowingly or unknowingly, by geo-sentiment. One of these ways is through study, and the other is through rationalistic mentality, rationalistic outlook. "Study" here means intensive intellectual analysis. What do I mean by intensive study? – internal assimilation, subjective assimilation of objective happenings. You should remember that existence is also an event, an external event. The assimilation of events is achieved through study. Now, knowledge can be divided into two categories, and indeed the entirety of knowledge does not come within the scope of study.

Knowledge is of two types: parañiṇā, or āptañiṇā [transcendental] and aparañiṇā, or praṭpañiṇā [non-transcendental]. Transcendental knowledge operates in the purely spiritual world, and derives its inspiration from the Cosmic Centre, the Universal Nucleus. It has nothing whatever to do with worldly gain or loss, exploitation or administration; nor has it any relation with imperialism, fascism or any variety of ism. This transcendental knowledge will inspire people to move in the purely spiritual world; it

will inspire them with countless elevating spiritual ideas. It is also called self-knowledge. Those who, in the name of this transcendental knowledge or in the name of God or of incarnation theory⁽¹⁾ hoodwink the simple and semi-educated, unwary masses to achieve their selfish ends, deserve extreme reprobation. But here our topic of discussion is not this transcendental knowledge; that comes within the scope of purely spiritual philosophy. Here our main concern is non-transcendental knowledge related to this material world. I have already spoken about transcendental knowledge, and I will do so again in future.

There are so many defects or drawbacks in study as well. Even in the case of intensive study, one may commit certain errors. You may ask, how will an illiterate person study? To this I will reply that such people can also study; they will learn by hearing others' discourses; so no one is handicapped in this regard. Moreover, study does not mean only the study of books. Study is of two types: literal and non-literal. Those who can read and write can avail themselves of literal study, and those who cannot read can benefit from non-literal study by listening to others.

Regarding non-literal study, people can collect much information from the material world by coming in contact with different objects through their various senses. There is a necessity for both literal and non-literal study, and human beings can avail themselves of both.

Now, there may be defects in both literal and non-literal study; thus knowledge acquired through study cannot be accepted as absolute, nor should it be. There are two kinds of defect. What is the first? Defect due to ignorance. And the second is defect due to change in tempor [time].

The person who taught me or the person whose writing I read – within that person's knowledge there may be a defect, and that defect may be passed on from person to person. This is called

defect due to ignorance.

The second defect is due to change in time. For instance, a certain book was written at a particular time, or certain knowledge was imparted at a certain time. That book or that knowledge expresses a certain reality according to its own temporal perspective; but the moment there is a change in time, then that reality loses its validity. In my childhood, we used to read in geography books that Allahabad was the capital of Uttar Pradesh (Uttar Pradesh had a different name then). But now that is considered erroneous due to change in time, because now Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh. After the shifting of the capital due to the change in the time factor, what was written in that book in those days is now confusing. So if the internal, or subjective, assimilation of external objectivity is effected through study alone, it may be wrong.

Suppose you collected certain knowledge through study, but the knowledge thus collected is defective. Those people who are motivated by geo-sentiments have been harming society in countless ways. You cannot identify such people through your defective knowledge; you cannot detect those human chameleons. So what is the solution? They will certainly continue to follow the path of vice; they are sure to harm others.

If you alone are personally harmed by those people, if you alone are persecuted, humiliated, or exploited, it does not matter much. But if a whole social group is affected, that cannot be ignored. You will have to identify such reactionary forces in the society, such vocal revolutionaries who claim to be socio-economico-political reformists, but who actually befoul the people by adopting such pseudo-reformist, pseudo-humanistic strategies. You will have to recognize them all.

When you fail through study to detect those pseudo-revolutionaries, those who are depriving the masses of the minimum necessities of life, what will you do? You will have

to identify them. You will have to analyse each and everything in the proper perspective. Until you come to a clear conclusion after proper analysis, you cannot rescue the people from the tightening noose of exploitation. Here the importance of study is tremendous – you will have to do it. You cannot afford to shut the pages of your books and remain like frogs in the well. You must enlarge your mental horizons and move ahead by shattering all social bondages.

What sorts of bondage? The bondages of geo-sentiment. You will have to shatter all of them. The frog in the well thinks that its well is perhaps the biggest body of water in the world. But when it comes in contact with a big pool, it realizes that the pool is greater than was the well. After coming in contact with a pond it further realizes that this is greater still than the pool. When finally it sees the ocean, it realizes that this is something really big. It thinks, "As long as I was in the well, I thought the well to be the greatest." Similarly, until geo-sentiment is removed, people will fail to realize the truth. Hence the tremendous importance of study.

But at the same time, care must be taken to avoid the limitations inherent in study. For instance, we are taught that our country is blessed with profuse water and laden with fruits. After hearing this, we may pass on this information to thousands of people. But after proper study, we come to discover that our country is suffering terribly from an acute scarcity of water: People do not even get a sufficient supply of drinking water, what to speak of water for irrigation. We are told, "Our country abounds in agricultural produce, especially fruits, which are then exported to different countries;" but after we study, we discover that our country is importing thousands of tons of food grains from different countries, and the very lives of our people depend upon these imports. Sometimes even rotten flour comes from distant lands, and that flour, after being soaked in water, serves as food. Yet we say, parrot-like: "My golden land, I adore you." These

are some examples of the bondages of geo-sentiment which people fall into due to their ignorance. Those who detect the facts later on simply burst into laughter and think, "When I repeated these tall tales to others, I wonder what they thought of me!" These types of false notion based on geo-sentiment have to be totally smashed, and for this there is no other way but careful study.

But even study is not enough. There are some people, particularly vocal revolutionaries, who glibly speak many high-sounding words. Through these high-sounding words, they sway the weak and sensitive parts of the mind. For instance, they say: "My native land is like this, like that"... "We are such-and-such race"... "We are a race of heroes and heroines." This is how they sentimentalize people. And, caught up in these geo-sentiments, the people become devoid of rationality and also shout to the same tune. At that time, they do not realize that their shouting is inspired by false information.

One will have to escape from those bondages of false information. "The water of such-and-such river of my country is so pure that it never becomes spoiled. By drinking it – what to speak of human beings only – each and every protoplasmic cell of the human body will attain liberation!" But strangely enough, in that river there are so many fish and aquatic creatures who do not attain liberation! Moreover, scientists, after examining that water, concluded that that so-called pure water is not fit even for bathing, much less for drinking! These are all different expressions of geo-sentiment.

Thus the importance of study is tremendous. Those who are educated must conduct seminars among themselves and also among the less-educated – they must make the latter understand. Knowledge must be disseminated throughout all sections of society. You must create opportunities for all people to judge everything in the light of truth. Liberate the intellect of each and every person. Human intellect is now bogged down in a

marshy quagmire – let people enjoy the sweet taste of intellectual freedom.

Rationalistic Mentality

You should remember that defects in study – defects due to ignorance and defects due to change in time – are all non-transcendental – praṭtajināṅa and not aṭtajināṅa. That which establishes one in the spiritual realm is transcendental knowledge. It is also called aṭta vakya in Sanskrit. How to eliminate these defects? Through rationalistic mentality. Everything written in books should not be automatically accepted. I may read and understand everything written in books, but my mental acceptance will come later. When shall I accept it? After thoroughly verifying all that I have read. Now for this verification, one must develop rationality. You should remember that study is the first step, and rationalistic mentality is one step higher. In which direction? Towards the establishment of Neohumanism.

The first step towards the establishment of Neohumanism is study; the second step is rationalistic mentality. I will hear something, then I will analyse its positive side and its negative side through rational analysis. I will weigh the pros and cons of everything. If the positive side is predominant, I will give my verdict in its favour – I will say, “Yes, it will do.” And when I see that the negative aspect is predominant, I will conclude in the negative – that is, I will say, “No, it will not do.”

(This sort of clear conclusion, this logical decision – not a mere decision only – in favour of either the positive or the negative is termed siddhaṅta in Sanskrit. So siddhaṅta means “logical decision”. Not just “decision”, “logical decision.” Do not confuse the word.)

This logical decision in favour of the positive or negative is not final either; you will still have to proceed ahead. And in

which direction is that next step? If that logical decision is conducive to human welfare, for the benefit and happiness of all beings, for the spiritual well-being of all, then only will we support and propagate that idea and devote ourselves wholeheartedly to its implementation. Otherwise we will some day say, "This decision is good, no doubt, but it has no value in the practical world. Its dazzling colour will vanish after some time, just like a firefly's glow."

Similarly, when you reach your clear decision in favour of the negative, and when you see that the rejection of that idea leads to the benefit and happiness of all beings, the spiritual well-being of all, you will reject it permanently – "My 'no' is final."

Or else, if you see that by proper cultivation it may be used for human welfare, then you should say, "My 'no' is not final – this idea may be used in future." That is, regarding anything that may later be used for promoting human welfare, the "no" is not a final one; but if it cannot be used at all for human welfare, the "no" is final. Perhaps in the future you will support it; not only support it, you may devote all your time and energy for its propagation. So this final discrimination for promoting human welfare which is the final outcome or desideratum point of discrimination, is called viveka – "conscience".

Now, what will you do to counteract geo-sentiment, to safeguard yourself and also the collective body? (It is more important to protect the collectivity than to save yourself.) First, you will study. And what will you do to remove the defects in study? You will have to come to a logical decision after examining the positive and negative sides. And then, after reaching a conclusion, you will decide whether that conclusion will be implemented or not; whether or not you will materialize that conclusion will be decided on the basis of whether or not it is conducive to human welfare. When you reach this final decision, this final desiderative point, that

is your conscience. Finally, through your conscience, you can successfully combat geo-sentiment.

Many people have come into this world, who by their cunning have instilled various dogmas in peoples' minds and exploited them in various ways. Ultimately the greatest necessity to fight against them is your conscience. I have already explained to you what conscience is. You must keep your conscience ever-vigilant. You must never merely applaud after hearing others' words or reading books. You must not give undue importance to any person or any theory. In this way you will have to fight against geo-sentiment through study and rationalistic mentality.

In the first stage you study; in the second you analyse the positive and negative sides; and in the third stage you arrive at "blissful or non-blissful, auxiliary or non-auxiliary."⁽²⁾ When you complete this whole process of logical reasoning, the outcome is your "awakened conscience". This state of awakened conscience is what is called "rationalistic mentality."

Keep your conscience ever-vigilant. Develop a firm rationalistic mentality, and no one will be able to deceive you by false geo-sentiment. This rationalistic mentality will provide you with sufficient inspiration and strength to fight against socio-sentiment, ordinary humanistic sentiment, and pseudo-humanistic strategy. You will not only gain vocal strength, but become strong in all respects.

22 March 1982, Calcutta

Footnotes

(1) The idea that someone is the direct descent of the Almighty. -Trans.

(2) That is, that which does or does not contribute to the welfare of all. -Trans.

Teacher as Neo-humanist

“Neo” means “ever new”. A Neo-humanist teacher is to keep an open perspective, free of dogma or limiting views.

Neo-humanism stands for the liberation of intellect by nurturing devotion as the highest treasure of the human heart that provides the inspiration to the learner to break through all kinds of limiting attitudes.