

# Neohumanism

Neohumanism is a highly innovative ideology introduced by Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar in his 1982 seminal work, "The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism"<sup>[1]</sup>. With Neohumanism, Shrii Sarkar redefines both humanity and humanism, as well as various commonly associated concepts. In addition, Shrii Sarkar injects several new elements intended to facilitate both individual and collective progress.

## Contents

Humanity Redefined.....	1
Three Functional Modes of Mind.....	2
Instinct.....	2
Sentiment.....	2
Rationality.....	3
Two Motives for Human Movement.....	3
Dogma and the Principle of Selfish Pleasure.....	3
Egalitarianism and the Principle of Social Equality.....	4
Humanism Redefined.....	4
Three Stages of Neohumanism.....	5
Universalism.....	5
References.....	6
Sources.....	7

## Humanity Redefined

The classic definition of *human being* is "[rational animal](#)". According to Shrii Sarkar, this definition is unacceptable. Shrii Sarkar insists that human beings have characteristics distinct from animals, and that human life is an ideological flow - identification with and commitment to an ideology.

## Neohumanism

*There are certain characteristics which are common to plants, animals and humans; some of which are common to animals and humans; and some of which are common to animals and plants. Some people have defined human beings as "rational animals", but I do not accept this definition. In my opinion, human life is an ideological flow. Human beings should identify themselves with that flow. If a human being is considered to be a rational animal, then could not an animal be defined as a "moving plant"? No, we can never say that animals are moving plants. Animals have their own distinct characteristics. Human beings also have their own distinct characteristics, which are collectively called dharma – mánava dharma [human dharma] or Bhágavata dharma [divine dharma]. With its characteristics such as vistára [expansion of mind], rasa [ideological flow] and sevá [selfless service], this mánava dharma is the true identity of human beings. Those in whom mánava dharma is not expressed are not worthy of being called human beings; they are human in form only.<sup>[2]</sup>*

## Three Functional Modes of Mind

According to Neohumanism, in addition to various activities like thinking and remembering, human mind has three modes of functioning: [instinct](#), [sentiment](#), and [rationality](#).<sup>[3]</sup>

### Instinct

The position of Neohumanism on [instinct](#) is conventional. All living beings, developed and undeveloped, have inborn instincts. Mosquitoes suck blood. Human babies drink their mother's milk. Instinct is neither good nor bad. It is natural.

### Sentiment

Regarding [sentiment](#), Neohumanism offers a broader perspective. According to Neohumanism, undeveloped minds operate only on instinct; whereas, in more developed minds (including human minds), sentiment also functions and tends to exceed instinct.

Goaded by sentiment, mind runs blindly after what it likes (or away from what it does not like). A sentimental being does not ask questions about propriety or even employ common sense. Accordingly, sentiment poses the risk that an irrational course of action may be adopted - a course of action that could destroy not just the sentimental individual but also an entire family or social group.

According to Neohumanism, two types of sentiment are common to human beings: geosentiment and sociosentiment. Geosentiment is the attraction felt toward one's own home, city, or country. Sociosentiment is the attraction felt toward one's own family, nation, or other social grouping (linguistic, religious, political, and so on). Neohumanism

observes that those who would exploit other human beings for their own selfish gain typically employ these two types of sentiment, often shifting or transforming sentiments whenever convenient. According to Neohumanism, geosentiment can be curbed through [rationality](#); however, to overcome sociosentiment an additional tool, [protospiritual mentality](#), may be required.

## Rationality

Philosophers have defined [rationality](#) in various ways. Some of those definitions could equally apply to animals or even plants. Neohumanism offers a new and precise definition of rationality that calls for a standard of mentality that is not discernible in any species other than human beings. According to Neohumanism, rationality is a three-stage process of discrimination that begins with adequate study to assimilate all relevant facts and ends with a decision in favor of only a *blissful auxiliary* (practical action that furthers the welfare of all).

*In the first stage you study; in the second you analyze the positive and negative sides; and in the third stage you arrive at "blissful or non-blissful, auxiliary or non-auxiliary". 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".<sup>[4]</sup>*

## Two Motives for Human Movement

According to Neohumanism, the impetus for human movement - human dynamism - may be either of two conflicting principles: the principle of selfish pleasure (*átma-sukha tattva*) or the principle of social equality (*sama-samája tattva*).<sup>[5]</sup>

## Dogma and the Principle of Selfish Pleasure

Neohumanism rejects [dogma](#) as contrary to [human nature](#). According to Neohumanism, all dogma is founded on a desire for selfish pleasure.

*All the social, economic and geographical forces that normally motivate human beings are guided by dogma; and this dogma in its turn is entirely based on *átma-sukha tattva* [the principle of selfish pleasure]. Human beings yield to this dogma with the sole intention of attaining selfish pleasures; even educated people knowingly submit to dogma. They know that they are surrendering their intellect to dogma, and that the outcome will be undesirable; they know and understand everything – why, even then, do they knowingly submit to it?... In the civilized world, even educated people knowingly follow dogmas because they have a desire in the back of their minds to attain some mundane pleasure in this physical world. Even in this civilized world where so much progress has been made in the field of knowledge, people are still following these dogmas, as if they*

## Neohumanism

*are blind. The snares of dogma will have to be shattered to pieces; the iron prison gates of dogma will have to be crushed to dust.*<sup>[6]</sup>

## Egalitarianism and the Principle of Social Equality

The concept of [egalitarianism](#) has been in circulation for thousands of years. Over time, the concepts have become broader and more sophisticated. Recently, various studies have been conducted with results that endorse the tremendous importance of having a more equitable society (see, for example, [The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better](#)<sup>[7]</sup> by [Richard G. Wilkinson](#) and [Kate Pickett](#)). Neohumanism promotes egalitarianism by asserting the principle of social equality and rejecting all [dogma](#) and [superstition](#).

*The endeavor to advance towards the ultimate reality by forming a society free from all inequalities, with everyone of the human race moving in unison, is called sama-samāja tattva [the principle of social equality]... We must totally reject all those hypocritical ideas which are contrary to this sama-samāja tattva, and we must welcome all those ideas which will help human beings to be established in it. All opposing theories must be removed mercilessly, just like thorns from our path. And in this process we must not give indulgence to any dogmas or supernatural ideas. This should be the task of today's human beings; all people should combine their efforts and strive unitedly to accomplish that end.*<sup>[8]</sup>

## Humanism Redefined

Historically, [humanism](#) has focused on the dominant value and values of human beings, individually and collectively. According to Neohumanism, this type of human-centered (or self-centered) approach is defective in that it may lead to two types of conflict: inter-creature clash and intra-human clash.

Neohumanism posits two types of value: [utility](#) value and existential value.<sup>[8]</sup> Until now, people have tended to think primarily in terms of utility value, typically, the utility that an entity has for oneself or one's nation.<sup>[9]</sup> So, for example, when horses were a primary means of transportation, the utility value of horses to human beings was very great. Today, with more efficient and comfortable means of transportation, horses have lost most of their utility value to humans. Accordingly, the status of horses in modern society is much reduced. But horses also have existential value. The existential value of a horse to itself is no less than the existential value of a human being to himself or herself. In terms of existential value, all beings are equal. Neohumanism would give greater importance to existential value than utility value. Hence, Neohumanism encourages the principle of social equality rather than the principle of selfish pleasure.

According to Neohumanism, realization of the principle of social equality is a natural consequence of spiritual practice (especially meditation founded on yogic [morality](#), Yama-Niyama<sup>[10]</sup>). However, realization of this principle is not the final stage of

Neohumanism, because application of a principle is somewhat mechanical. In the final stage of Neohumanism, the human being's life is transformed into a blissful mission of love.

### Three Stages of Neohumanism

Neohumanism presents itself in three stages of development.<sup>[11]</sup>

The first stage of Neohumanism is spiritual practice to enhance the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of the practitioner. The stage of spiritual practice indirectly benefits society through the social service that is part of spiritual practice.

The second stage of Neohumanism is spiritual principle (or essence). Its impact is mainly in the mental and spiritual realms, both individual and collective. According to Neohumanism, practice of rationality and adherence to the principle of social equality (especially when combined with *protospiritual mentality*<sup>[12]</sup>) will not only strengthen individual minds but also the collective human mind to the point that humanity as a whole can withstand the destructive effect of geosentiment and sociosentiment and the demonic exploiters who ruthlessly capitalize on those sentiments.

The third and final stage of Neohumanism is spiritual mission. According to Neohumanism, when an individual's existential nucleus (soul) merges with the Cosmic Existential Nucleus, s/he attains the consummation of her/his existence. Neohumanism asserts that this supreme status ensures the future of not only the human world but also of the animal and plant worlds as well.

### Universalism

Shrii Sarkar writes:

*When the underlying spirit of humanism is extended to everything, animate and inanimate, in this universe, I have designated this as "Neohumanism". This Neohumanism will elevate humanism to universalism, the cult of love for all created beings of this universe.*<sup>[13]</sup>

According to Neohumanism, love for the Supreme (devotion) is the highest and most valuable treasure of humanity.<sup>[13]</sup> It automatically results in [non-religious universalism](#). However, Neohumanism deems devotion to be a very tender inner asset, frequently assailed by materialism and other onslaughts from the external world. To preserve this treasure, Shrii Sarkar submits Neohumanism as a practical philosophy that provides a protective fence for devotion by (1) establishing harmony between the spiritual and material worlds (2) providing perennial inspiration for the onward march of society.<sup>[13]</sup>

*Once long ago I went to Purulia. I was carrying heavy baggage. I asked a village man: "Can you carry this baggage?" He replied: "Why not, certainly I can!" I*

## Neohumanism

*appreciated his answer very much. And I am sure that one day this Neohumanism will inspire the world population to say, "Why not, certainly we can!"*

*And I am confident that on that day no geo-sentiment will be able to rear its head, no socio-sentiment will be able to erect barriers of discrimination in human society, nor will any demon be able to harm millions of people in the name of humanism by exploiting their gullibility. And when those ever-vigilant human beings, those physico-psycho-spiritual entities, will be able to merge their existential nuclei with the Supreme Existential Nucleus, then only will Neohumanism be permanently established, and human beings will be ensconced in the joy of freedom forever. On that day they will proclaim in full-throated voices: "We have come to the world to perform great deeds – for the physical welfare of all, for the psychic happiness of all, and for the spiritual elevation of all – to lead all from darkness unto light." If, even then, someone says: "No, darkness is good for me!" we will tell them: "All right, darkness is good for you, but just once why don't you come and see the light – it is even better!"<sup>[11]</sup>*

## References

1. [^](#) Sarkar, Prabhat Rainjan (1982). *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism*. Kolkata: Ananda Marga Publications. ISBN 81-7252-168-5.
2. [^](#) "The Glory of Human Dharma", 21 February 1979, Bhopal. Published in *Ananda Vacanamrtam Part 8*, Ananda Marga Publications, 1987.
3. [^](#) Sarkar, Prabhat Rainjan (1982). "Geo-Sentiment (Discourse 3)" of *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism*. Kolkata: Ananda Marga Publications. ISBN 81-7252-168-5.
4. [^](#) "Awakened Conscience (Discourse 9)", Kolkata, 1982 March 22. Published in *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism*. Kolkata: Ananda Marga Publications. ISBN 81-7252-168-5.
5. [^](#) Sarkar, Prabhat Rainjan (1982). "Sama-Samája Tattva (Discourse 6)" of *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism*. Kolkata: Ananda Marga Publications. ISBN 81-7252-168-5.
6. [^](#) [a](#) [b](#) "Sama-Samája Tattva (Discourse 6)", Kolkata, 1982 March 22. Published in *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism*. Kolkata: Ananda Marga Publications. ISBN 81-7252-168-5.
7. [^](#) UK Hardback edition: *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. London, Allen Lane, 5 March 2009. [ISBN 978-1-84614-039-6](#)  
UK Paperback edition [ISBN 978-0-14-103236-8](#) (February, 2010).
8. [^](#) Sarkar, Prabhat Rainjan (1982). "Pseudo-Humanism (Discourse 8)" of *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism*. Kolkata: Ananda Marga Publications. ISBN 81-7252-168-5.
9. [^](#) From this emphasis on utility value, the [normative](#) philosophy of [utilitarianism](#), perhaps an extension of [consequentialism](#), emerged. It may also be noted that not all utilitarian or consequentialist philosophers have argued solely in terms of

## Neohumanism

the pleasure and pain of humans. [Jeremy Bentham](#) and more recently [Peter Singer](#) are notable exceptions to that rule.

10. <sup>^</sup> [A Guide to Human Conduct](#), Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. Fourth Paperback Edition, 2004, Ananda Marga Publications. ISBN-13: 9788172521035.
11. <sup>^</sup> [a](#) [b](#) Sarkar, Prabhat Rainjan (1982). "Neohumanism Is the Ultimate Shelter (Discourse 11)" of *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism*. Kolkata: Ananda Marga Publications. ISBN 81-7252-168-5.
12. <sup>^</sup> Protospiritual mentality is a type of thinking whereby one remembers that everything and everyone with whom one comes in contact is a manifestation of Supreme Consciousness (Parama Brahma) - that all existential phenomena emanate from the Supreme (Cosmic) Existential Nucleus.
13. <sup>^</sup> [a](#) [b](#) [c](#) Sarkar, Prabhat Rainjan (1982). "Devotional Sentiment and Neohumanism (Discourse 1)" of *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism*. Kolkata: Ananda Marga Publications. ISBN 81-7252-168-5.

## Sources

- Abhidevananda, Acarya Avt., [Neohumanism](#). 2012.
- Anandamurti, Shrii Shrii, *A Guide to Human Conduct*. [Ananda Marga Publications](#). 1957-1981. [ISBN 81-7252-103-0](#).
- Newman, Avery, [From Faith to Freedom](#). 1983. ASIN: B005FG2HYQ.
- Sarkar, Prabhat Ranjan, *Neohumanism in a Nutshell, Vol. 1*. [Ananda Marga Publications](#). 1987. [ISBN 81-7252-184-7](#).
- Sarkar, Prabhat Ranjan, *Neohumanism in a Nutshell, Vol. 2*. [Ananda Marga Publications](#). 1987. [ISBN 81-7252-184-7](#).
- Sarkar, Prabhat Ranjan, *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism*. [Ananda Marga Publications](#). 1982. [ISBN 81-7252-168-5](#).