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Manhood of Humanity

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EFFECTIVE? TIME-BINDING – A REVISIT

PRASHANT CHAUHAN

Abstract

From the beginning and through the history of human beings, one thing becomes clear that we as human beings always want to develop. Human beings, whether as an individual or as a society and civilization, want to become better, always want to make things better and life easy to live. At the present time we have various documentations on the development of human history. From the evolution to the twenty-first century, we as a civilization have developed enormously. Although human civilization has developed greatly, it faces problems. General Semantics states that on the earth we humans are the only living beings who can bind time and learn from the past. According to studies, modern form of human evolved about two million years ago. In literature, it is said that ‘everything that is in this world has already been written.’ All the possible problems and their solutions are already given; and yet, we face the same kind of problems continually. There are a number of questions that arise on which present paper focuses: ‘Are we good enough to bind time? Why are we facing same kind of problems? How can one prevent them?’ On the way of trying to find answers to these questions, I came across Plato’s “Republic,” where he talks about the ‘Ideal State.’ Here I have made attempts to find all possible questions and acceptable answers to those questions.

Keywords: *time-binding, Effective Time-binding, ideal state, human civilization, problems, Plato*

Introduction

“In Europe we know that an age is dying... a realization of the aimlessness of life lived to labor and to die, having achieved nothing but avoidance of starvation, and the birth of children also doomed to the weary treadmill, has seized the minds of millions.” (Sir Auckland Geddes, qtd.in Korzybski)

General Semantics is a system of life, more precisely a way of life, scientific, mathematical, and logical way of life. If we consider it as a term then it is another umbrella term as ‘culture’ because it studies each and everything that is connected with human life, as Korzybski states, “organism as a whole in an environment.” He further states: “I had to include neuro-linguistic and neuro-semantic (evaluational) environments as environments, and also had to consider geographic, physico-chemical, economic, political, ecological, socio-cultural, etc.” In the Preface of *Manhood of Humanity* he in very first line says, it is a “study of Man the great qualities and problems of Man.”

The paper focuses on some questions that are related with human life and the problems that humanity is facing. As it is said that everything that is in the world is already been written; it is right to say that all the problems and their possible solutions are also given. Still humanity is facing certain problems. The main focus of this paper is not any one society or civilization; it focuses on ‘earth as a whole civilization.’

As I earlier mentioned, it is said and believed that all things are already been written and so all the problems and their solutions as well. Still humanity is facing certain problems, such as inequality, wars, and environmental problems. These are the main problems of human civilization. Through the history of human beings and human civilization, there have been many wars. The problem of inequality is also not new, and environmental problems that we are facing are so great that it is valid to say that if humanity wants to survive then environmental problems have not to be ruled out. These three are the main problems of civilization.

Here the main question is: ‘Are we not able to learn from our past?’ ‘Are we not able to bind time?’ ‘Is there any way of preventing the problems of inequality?’ ‘Is there any way of preventing wars?’ and if the answer to these questions is in the negative, then the question arises ‘why?’ the same question that Korzybski had when he was thinking about mankind and its problems. The question of ‘why?’ can be considered as one of the fundamental questions of general semantics thinking. Korzybski himself has said: “human nature was always asking ‘why?’ and not being able to answer they found their answers through factor ‘who?’ the unknown was called, god. But with the progress of science the ‘why’ became more evident, and the question came to be ‘how?’ But what if the answers of those questions are not negative and through the thinking and mainly thinking in one certain manner we can get the right logical answer. Again by quoting Korzybski’s “logic is the muse of thought” it is very much relevant and acceptable to say that if the answers of those questions are logical then they are acceptable. Then yes there are certain ways of solving all the major problems of mankind. But before jumping on those answers it is important to take a look at the problems that are mentioned earlier, and it is also necessary to know why only those problems are that much important to solve and to make humankind better.

Effective time-binding?

Childhood and Manhood of Humanity

As earlier mentioned, the present paper focuses on ‘earth as a whole civilization’. Scientific studies state that the modern form of human evolved about two million years ago while our ancestors have been around for about six million years. Civilization as we know it is only about six thousand years old, and industrialization started in the nearest only in the 1800s. Further studies state: “With seven billion people on Earth, pollution from industry and cars is a growing element in climate change – which affects our planet in ways we can’t predict. But we’re already seeing the effects in melting glaciers and rising global temperatures.”

This represents the present time of humanity. All the scientific studies indicate that to survive on the planet we have to take certain steps. We have to learn from all the past mistakes that our ancestors have made. As it is stated by S.L.Bhyrappa in the preface of *Aavarana*, “we are not responsible for the mistakes committed by our previous generations. However, if we equate ourselves with them and regard ourselves as their heirs, we must then be ready to also share the responsibility for their mistakes.”

Further in the *Manhood of Humanity*, Korzybski states: “...the World War marks the end of one vast period in the life of humankind and marks the beginning of another. It marks the end of humanity’s childhood and the beginning of humanity’s manhood.” When one thinks of this statement, it creates many questions. Because even after one war that used to be considered as ‘the great war’ another war bigger than that took place in history. And still, humanity is suffering from

wars. The only difference is ‘change in the face of war.’ Again stating S.L.Bhyrappa, “we won’t attain maturity unless we cultivate the wisdom to discriminate which deeds of our ancestors we need to reject and which achievements we need to take inspiration from. If learning lesson from history is a mark of enlightenment, so is breaking free from it. It applies equally to every religion, caste, creed, and group.”

This is what General Semantics shows. The main concept of Time-Binding is to learn from the past, and so the idea of General Semantics is to learn from the past and make the present better, to avoid mistakes, and to make a better future for us and for our next generation. But the question comes to how much we have learned from our histories.

Learning from the past and avoiding the same mistakes is what we can call ‘Effective Time-Binding’, and that is the true sign of being mature and that is something that we can call ‘Manhood of humanity.’ But the question comes, “Are we in that form in the present time?” Is humanity in its Manhood? The questions are quite complicated; at a point, humanity has been developed dramatically, such as development in the fields of industries and medical sciences, while the other part of the research shows that humanity is suffering from many problems such as in food, climate change, pollution, population, wars (including cyber warfare), and this list can go on. From this perspective, one might say that still humanity has reached its complete manhood.

Problems of Humanity

The very first problem that comes in mind by which whole humanity is suffering is problem of ‘war.’ It seems that wars are part of our existence and culture. Even before the arrival of Man on earth there was war in heaven. As it is mentioned in the Bible, there was war between Lucifer who wanted power for himself and God who had all the power. According to this religious context, it can be said that wars are part of human life. But as Korzybski mentioned in the preface of *Manhood of Humanity*: “...in this book an effort has been made to approach the problem of man from a scientific-mathematical point of view, and therefore great pains have been taken *not* to use words insufficiently defined, or words with many meanings.” As this statement shows it is not much relevant to just think by religious or biblical context; there must be some scientific proofs which can support the argument and lead further towards scientific-thinking. But in the same paragraph he again mentions that: “I repeat once again that this book is not a ‘materialistic’ or a ‘spiritualistic’ book – it is study of Man and therefore does and should include materialistic as well as spiritual phenomena because only the complex of these phenomena constitutes the complex of Man.”

As John F. Kennedy rightly said, “Mankind must put an end to war before war put an end to mankind.” We have documents that show Great War happened and after that another great war happened. The question is same, why is it happening? And as Korzybski mentioned that it is the human nature to ask ‘why’ and because humans have not been able to find the answer to ‘why’ they found their answer through ‘who’. So when we try to ask that why all wars are taking place again and again and because we never had the answer, we ended up by arriving at the conclusion that this or that war has happened because of him or her.

This civilization has faced two great wars, the World War I and World War II. There have been so many cold wars and many other wars as well, but these two Wars have affected the whole world. Thinking, literature, culture, environment, and every aspect of human life have been affected because of these two Wars. It is said that first war was so great that it was called the ‘Great War’ and people used to believe that there cannot be any other war like this. But within the time of certain years it took place again, and still in twenty-first century it is considered as world’s most deadly war in the history of human beings. The First World War started in 1914 and ended in 1918, which was responsible for the deaths of around 18 million people. This was a great scar on humanity, but only after twenty-one years in 1939 the Second World War started which ended by 1945. The First World

War was known as 'the War to End all wars' but after the Second World War, it became World War I. The Second World War was responsible for the deaths around 75 million, including about 20 million military personnel and 40 million civilians, many of whom died because of deliberate genocide, massacres, mass-bombing, disease, and starvation.

These are just two wars mentioned; in the history books there are so many wars such as The Second Sino-Japanese War, The Qing Dynasty Conquest of the Ming Dynasty, Taiping Rebellion, An Lushan Rebellion etc. All these are considered as deadliest wars in human history. The main concern is that, this is not the end of these wars. Still in the twenty-first century humanity is standing on the verge of war. Wars nowadays certainly have changed its face; now the wars are different from before, though they have become more deadly. It is right to say that now if the war happens, it might end the earth, or at least it will end a very big amount of life from the earth. In current time now, it is not only about the wars that are happening or about what will happen in the future on land. Virtual wars also harm on the same level, wars that are there on internet (cyber wars) and the wars that are there in space. As it has changed its face and have become something more devastating, if it takes place again, then it might get beyond the limits of humans who have started it. And so it is very much important to think on it and work on it towards finding the solutions.

The second problem of humanity as a whole is the problem of inequality. When we think of inequality as a vast term, it becomes one of the main problems of humanity. All the revolutions, all the wars, all the development took place on the pages of history books because of the problem of inequality. On world level it breaks the limit of physical inequality. Inequalities of race, class, economy, gender, are important to solve on the certain bases. But when the concern is not any one class, society or one civilization, then main inequality that needs to be solved is 'inequality of mind.'

Mental inequality takes place because of certain ideologies that people follow. Korzybski in *Manhood of Humanity* said: "...but they do not fully use their education if they do not try to broaden their sense of responsibility towards all mankind instead of closing themselves up in a narrow specialization where they find their pleasure." When the main focus is 'whole earth as a one civilization' it is important to think beyond one's individuality. All minds are not the same, all cannot think the way a philosopher can, so it is the task of those great minds to spread their thinking and right ideology to other minds.

Inequality is one of the main reasons behind all the wars and revolutions. Some critics have said that 'there must be cultural – silent revolution instead of bloody revolution.' This can be possible only if those great minds stop thinking only about them and start thinking of the whole human civilization. Only then it can be possible to prevent the inequality of human mind.

Third, but the most important and main problem of whole humankind is the problem of environment. As the present paper opens with a line, 'in Europe we know that an age is dying', according to the situation it can be right to say that 'Earth is Dying.' In very first chapter of *Manhood of Humanity* Korzybski has said: "...our globe is too small to support the human population now upon it. Humanity must produce or perish." The problem of environment is so great that if humans are not able to solve it, there is a clear possibility of the extinction of human being. Science is developing more and more, human civilization is developing more and more, and in the process, we are destroying the environment. It is right to make a statement like this, 'The more we develop, more we destroy'; as it is said by Korzybski, "Philosophy, law and ethics, to be effective in a dynamic world must be dynamic." The statement that is made before and the one made by Korzybski seem contradictory and so there is an ideology that says: "Something should never be invented."

According to numbers, earth is greener than before, but still glaciers are melting. Climate is changing, many species have been extinct and many are on the verge of extinction. The problem of dwelling is there, problems of pollution, and so many other problems that put questions on human

life and its future. The question, ‘what is the Future of Earth?’ becomes so important for us because our life is completely dependent upon the answer to that one question. The answer of ‘what is the future of mankind?’ depends upon the answer of the previous question.

What can be the solution to prevent/solve these problems?

Now when the problems are defined, and why they are very much important to be solved is known, then the solution is also required. Here when the main question is whether we are able to learn from the past or not, it would be better to go back to history and try to find the answer. As Korzybski quoted Dr. J. H. Robinson: “Man’s abject dependence on the past gives rise to the continuity of history.” Further Korzybski also said: “...history is an expansion of memory, and like memory it alone can explain the present and in this lies it’s most unmistakable value.”

By going back what I meant is going back and re-visit the old ideologies. By quoting Raja Rao: “India, where the past and the present are for-ever knit in to one whole experience,” I propose, to go back to the Indian ideology of ‘Advaita Vedanta’ and with this it is important to go back to Plato and re-read his ideologies of an ‘ideal state.’

The Indian ideology of Advaita is all about considering, the whole world as one, and through the teaching of Advaita we can prevent the problem of inequality. Only by preventing the problems of inequality, we can get solution for almost everything. There will be no wars if people start following this ideology. It is said, ‘the greatest illusion of the world is the illusion of separation.’ Plato is also important here because his ideas of an ideal state are clear and precise. Plato in his *Republic* has mentioned the ways by which one can make a state ideal. In the second book of the *Republic* he says, to make a state ideal very first thing that is required is to work on children’s education. It is very much important to make sure that what they are learning is right in the way of making an ideal state. He also allows changing history, mythology, and literature in such a way that helps to make people think in one certain way only.

Conclusion

Towards the conclusion of the paper, it can be said that yes we humans are time binders and we can bind time, but the only thing is, there must be some limitations on everything. Humanity is always in a flux. But by following right way we can prevent the problems of human civilization. By following right ideas we can make an actual utopia.

Right now the humanity is suffering from wars, inequality, and problems of environment. All these can be solved only by understanding that there is nothing like individuality. The idea of oneness is the key of all the solution of the problems that humanity is facing. To make it real we need to teach the children the way Plato described in his *Republic*. By following the ideology of Plato’s republic we can make people think in one certain manner, and then we can teach them one-ness.

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