

## A New Wave of Consciousness 4

### The Wind, One Brilliant Day

The wind, one brilliant day, called  
to my soul with an aroma of jasmine.

“In return for the odor of my jasmine,  
I’d like all the odor of your roses.”

“I have no roses; all the flowers  
In my garden are dead.”

“Well then I’ll take the waters of the fountains,  
And the withered petals and the yellow leaves.”

The wind left. And I wept. And I said to myself:  
“What have you done with the garden that was entrusted to you?”

Antonio Machado

## **A New Wave of Consciousness**

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The science of climate change has produced many dire predictions of irreversible climatic events spiraling out of control in a manner that does not support life as we know it on the planet. These crises depict environmental, social and economic conditions which are the results of our chosen carbon hungry, consumerist life style. If this is true then the problems themselves suggest that the solution, in part, lies within the correction of the human habits that have contributed to the crises we face. To ameliorate the crises, means we have to change our habits which are driven by values, attitudes, and perceptions; essentially how we think, feel and behave regarding our inner and outer resources. Thus psychological complexes lie at the core of the global crises we face today, begging for a positive shift in consciousness as a remedy.

P. R. Sarkar (1982), the Indian philosopher and spiritual leader, optimistically states in his seminal book, *Neohumanism: Liberation of the Intellect* that a new wave of thought is moving in the human mind that translates as a growing appreciation of the interconnectedness of the animate and inanimate world. Sarkar refers to this new wave of consciousness as Neohumanism which elevates the love of humanity in the philosophy of humanism to the love of all created beings, animate and inanimate. The philosophy of Neohumanism which integrates spiritual, psycho-social and environmental perspectives has inspired a global educational system that teaches children and people of all ages the tenets of the philosophy and practices associated with a Neohumanist Education (NHE). NHE fosters the desire in individuals to develop their inner most selves and to serve others, creating a greater opportunity for the needed shift in consciousness to surmount the current global crises we face.

As P. R. Sarkar (1982) implies in his writing, the current global environmental and socio-economic crises can be defined as having its roots in the human-sentiments that discount the existential value of plants, animals and environmental elements, geo-sentiments that involve attachment to place and socio-sentiments reflected in our attachment to groups. Thus the problems of greed and consumerism manifest in our individual lives are compounded by our collective global economies which are driven by nationalism and global competition for limited resources. This is not to say that our crises are only psychological in nature for it is obvious that these global challenges express themselves simultaneously as environmental, socio-economic and psycho-spiritual disorders. At its foundation the world is suffering from a collective psycho-spiritual disorder in which many individuals deny the unity of all animate and inanimate beings.

At this critical juncture it is important to ask the proper question for all citizens of planet earth that inspires us to seek solutions that serve the general welfare. The Spanish poet Antonio Machado in a poem entitled *The Wind One Brilliant Day* phrases the question in this manner, "What have you done with the garden that was entrusted to you?" (Bly 2004).

This question addresses our individual and collective conscience concerning what we are doing with our inner and outer resources on this earth. Re-phrased the question becomes do we as human beings accept ourselves as not just passive stakeholders but as caretakers of this delicately balanced web of life? In their respective seminal works, Arne Naess' deep

ecology (1988) and Jim Lovelock's Gaia (1979) helped us to realize the unity of the self and the environment. Now P. R. Sarkar gives us a Neohumanist blueprint to educate and inspire the needed critical mass of individuals to overcome the overindulgences and social perceptions that separate us from ourselves, each other and our mother earth.

Obviously the right ideas for reform have not been enough so far to halt our reckless misuse and abuse of planetary resources. **What is needed is a Neohumanist education inspired by a special class of artists and teachers that connects us with the larger sense of community** that results in compassionate actions on a local and global level.

This paper is focused principally on the educational solutions to the psycho-social problems that fuel the multifaceted crises we face. My thesis is that we must begin with education that identifies and corrects internal imbalances on the psycho-spiritual level in order to bring about the needed changes on the external socio-economic and environmental levels. To achieve real progress an integral approach on the physical, social, psychic and spiritual levels is required. Before looking at the educational solutions, let us examine more closely the nature of our global psycho-socio-spiritual crises.

### Global Psycho-Socio-Spiritual Crises

The Buddhist writer Ian Prattis (2002) in his essay *A Failed Genetic Experiment* states that, "We must be willing to create a radical Internal Climate Change. To address the external symptoms without changing the internal mindset achieves nothing." Peter Russell (1996) writes in his book *Crisis of Consciousness*, "At its root, the crisis of our times is not so much an environmental crisis, an economic crisis, a population crisis or a political crisis; it is in essence a consciousness crisis -- a mismatch between our psychological development and our technological development." He goes on to pose the pertinent questions, "Can we realize that the ego-mode is not the only mode, and certainly no longer the most appropriate. And can we then release ourselves from its grip, and allow our true intelligence to shine into the world? The root of our environmental crisis is an inner spiritual aridity. We need not only to conduct research in the physical and biological sciences, but also need to explore the psychological and more sacred

sciences.” P. R. Sarkar (1998) makes the case that before we can change individual sentiments and social patterns of excessive attachment to material goods, place and group identification, a rational and protospiritual mentality must be developed. Sarkar optimistically tells us, “that we have crossed the threshold into a new era and that the future of humanity is bright.” These three authors are all suggesting that a psycho-spiritual shift is key to resolving the current global crises.

The science of climate change threats has been well documented and chronicled by scientist, writers and activists like Bill McKibben (2007), Paul Hawken (2007), and the Noble Laureate/writer Al Gore. However, the debate today, this first day of June 2008, in the US Congress among policy makers juxtaposes arguments for taxing industrialists for carbon emissions versus avoiding taxing the industrialists as they will likely pass this tax for carbon emissions onto the public in higher prices for their products. This is evidence of the unyielding nature of the psychological attachment of policy makers, industrialists and the larger public, all of whom are not willing to look beyond the prices they, as a developed country, are paying at the pump and grocery store. Economic dogma that supports immediate gratification has the larger population in the US ignoring the immediate threats to the quality of life on the planet currently manifest as food riots occurring in developing countries. The disregard for not only the disenfranchised masses but the quality of life for everyone is no longer a future threat to generations to come but a present danger. Each individual must weigh in on Machado’s question- what are we doing with the planet left in our care.

### Hyper-Individualism

The “hyper-individualism” in Western societies described by Bill McKibben in his book *Deep Economy* (McKibben, 2007) helps us to get a better understanding of the collective psychological denial of our social responsibility. Evidence for this thesis cited by McKibben begins with a quote from British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher in 1987 who said, “There is no such thing as society. There are just individuals and their families.” In America he points to liberal politicians dismantling welfare programs and conservative politicians cutting taxes as they treat the “public realm” of parks, schools, social security, and universal health care as the government’s encroachment on our independent individual life styles. Americans are offered “health savings accounts” so that they can “take care of themselves.” He goes on to say that our commitment to this hyper-

individualism encourages us to “tolerate and celebrate” inequalities such as the gap between the rich and everyone else.

Fifty Five percent of Americans under the age of thirty have as their goal becoming rich. McKibben points out that this striving for wealth characterized as “making something of you” has the high price tag of alienation. Many people live at a long distance from their family of origin on oversized lots, in oversized houses with one-person internet alcoves and television sets and his and her offices. According to the U. S. Census Bureau, the average density of cities, suburbs, and town in 1920 was about 10 persons per acre, even as the population doubled. The average density of housing developments today in America is two people per acre. Jeremy Rifkin (2007) says this amounts to “occupying eight times more developed land than we did more than eighty years ago.” We have exchanged an identity of community and extended family for a mobile society creating suburban sprawl with all of its furnishings, accessories, and loan indebtedness. P. R. Sarkar warns that if we have more than we need it becomes a mental illness.

This expansive consumerism and social alienation is blindly supported by economists who encourage productivity as the goal. These economists favor a geographically mobile society which functions more efficiently by encouraging individuals to move to locations where they are more productive; ignoring the fact that they are no longer near family and friends where their lives are more stable and their marriages are more likely to last. It follows that the more individualistic and mobile societies have the highest divorce rate. The migratory population of the Sub Belt in the US has twice the divorce rate as the more stable communities of New England. Richard Layard (2005) reports that, “if people are highly mobile, they feel less bonded to the people among whom they live and crime is more common.” This mobility and disregard for others may account for the fact the average person in their twenties or thirties is half as likely as their grandparents to join a group of any kind or to offer some social services to others.

The patterns that this mobility creates for the isolated nuclear family has alarming effects on the psychological development of current generations of children. The domino effects of loss of the extended family support; both parents working to make ends meet and/or single parents working long hours away from home and young people’s exposure to the privatized entertainment industry with it’s crude programming through multiple

technologies (television, computer games, movies, and varied hand held technologies) is producing what poet and writer Robert Bly refers to as the “sibling society”.

In his book *The Sibling Society*, Bly (1996) states that this generation of youth has lost their respect for authority and ancestral traditions and thus turn to peers for models and guidance which produces a prolonged adolescence or a generation that never grows up. This loss of the vertical which he defines as the appreciation of values associated with parents, ancestors, traditions and spiritual guidance results in a horizontal society that has to reinvent itself as a popular culture of youth without the wisdom of the previous generations. Some of the worse consequences for youth stagnated in this sibling society is the growing identification with gangs, increasing numbers of youth with substance abuse and juvenile delinquency problems, high suicide and accidental/homicidal death rates, rising statistics of adolescent pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and soaring school drop out rates.

While these are some of the psycho-social fall outs of rampant consumerism and individualism of western societies, eastern societies are unfortunately pursuing similar directions economically and culturally. Lester Brown (2006), one of the world’s leading eco-statisticians, states “The western economic model- fossil-fuel based, auto-centered throwaway economy is not going to work for China. And if does not work for China, it will not work for India, which has an economy growing at 7 percent a year and a population projected to surpass China’s in 2030. Nor will it work for the other three billion people in the developing world who are also dreaming the American dream.” We are witnessing another industrial revolution in the Orient as farming families migrate to the cities. In China the biggest migration in earth’s history is occurring where 30 million people a year migrate to the city from a crowded country side where the average farm was a sixth of an acre. Under a capitalist economy China’s grasslands and forests are disappearing. The degradation of the environment and the decline of quality of life in China is growing at a proportional rate to their productivity and exports. The mental health impact of this rapidly expanding economy has not been properly assessed but if one considers this expansion as highly correlated to environmental and personal stress indexes we can begin to imagine the psychological toll on these oriental populations. Added to the stress of industrialization and a more mobile culture is the fact that many oriental cultures are adopting pop culture from the west embodied in

the universally available fast food restaurants, pop music, fashions, movies, and the vast array of locally produced hand held technologies that bring the world directly to them. This imposed pseudo-culture combined with the acquisitory drive for “more” seen in an expanding economy weakens the wisdom cultures of the orient and makes its people more vulnerable to a decline in morality and psychic disturbances similar to western cultures.

In contrast the undeveloped nations of the world suffer more so from physical deprivations rather than psychic illnesses. Colonialization and home grown ethnic violence have contributed to retardation of the physical development of many poorer countries. Internal military rule and dictatorships have stultified the development of many Asian, African, Central American and South American countries.

In spite of incursions by foreign powers over the centuries, many of the Middle Eastern countries have been more successful in maintaining their cultural heritage and control of their oil rich economies under the rule of orthodox religions. However, these eastern countries are plagued by the problems of domination of one group over another from within and without revealing the geo-sentiments and socio-sentiments that continue to separate us as human beings from one another.

In the nineteen thirties Aldous Huxley and Buckminster Fuller (1981) suggested that the next step in human evolution would be a psychic and social evolution moving away from the Darwinian competitive notion of survival of the fittest to a stance of cooperation- learning to live together. **These psychologically competitive and acquisitory tendencies of human beings must be transformed into cooperative and compassionate tendencies if we are to survive the global crises of environmental degradation and socio-economic inequities.** We as a planetary society stand at a crossroad. One direction if taken heralds the destruction of a planet that supports life as we know it; the alternative direction offers a resplendent crimson dawn of the cooperative human spirit. The question becomes who will be the vanguard to lead humanity out of its darkest hour of the soul?

Inspiration for Change

P. R. Sarkar (1966) has strongly emphasized that it is the artist that will lead the world out of its darkest crises. He offers that “The people of Asia and America are touching each other’s minds and have learned to accept each other sympathetically as their own. Gradually everyone has begun to realize the vibration of the One Integral Mind. It is my firm conviction that the future of humanity is not dark. Those who will carry the message of that effulgent light will be forever revered by all humanity. I see the potentiality of those memorable and venerable people in the litterateurs and artists, and that is why I hold them in great regard.” (Sarkar 1998, p. 96). “The ideal of an artist is to be established in a transcendent realm, beyond the limits of the senses. So the artists, or more precisely, the worshippers of fine arts, have to be spiritual aspirants. Only those who look upon everything of the world as Spirit can realize in everything a subtle, blissful, Transcendental Entity. The greater the artists’ understanding of their kinship with the Supreme, the greater their art.” (Sarkar 1998, p. 79).

Sarkar (1998) refers to literature as Sa’hitya meaning moving together; “it is the portrait of real life – an external expression of the internal recesses of the mind – a bold and powerful expression of the suppressed sighs of the human heart.” The other meaning of Sa’hitya is the spirit of welfare. Thus Sarkar defines “literature” as “that which moves together with the society, which leads society towards true fulfillment and welfare by providing the inspiration for service. The statement “Art for art’s sake” is not acceptable; rather it is better to say, “Art for service and blessedness.” He goes on to say, “Indeed, that welfare which pertains to the mundane world is relative; its definition also may change according to the changes in time, place and person. But that aspect of the term *hita* which leads human beings to the absolute truth is one and the same for all ages and all countries.” Thus literature reflects “a grand flow of ideas, with the common people on one side, and the state of Supreme Bliss on the other.” Thus the goal of literature and “art for service and blessedness” is to inspire the recipients of the art form to move together in a benevolent fashion towards the spiritual and universal (Sarkar, 1998 p 36-37).

Sarkar (1998) points to the difficult task of the epochal artist who must boldly and unflinchingly represent the conditions of their time. He says, “It is only through waging a ceaseless struggle against all opposing forces that they will lead humanity forward. For their offense of outspokenness, the vested interests of the different sections of society may threaten them menacingly, but they must remain undaunted by this. As the symbol of the



hopes and desires of millions of people, they will have to hold aloft the possibilities of the next era, after transcending the limits of this one” (1998, p 16).

Along with artists Sarkar (1998) also assigns teachers a major leadership role for the entire society. He states, “Teachers must possess such qualities as personal integrity, strength of character, righteousness, a feeling for social service, unselfishness, an inspiring personality and leadership ability.” (Sarkar 1998, p 17) Teachers he says have the responsibility to build ideal men and women and therefore they should be given the right to formulate educational policy without political and governmental interference. (Sarkar 1998, p 18) Thus it is those teachers and artists who have insight into the collective psychology and combine spiritual consciousness and social activism that can help society overcome the crises that confront us today. A philosophical foundation to protect and convey the inspiration of these benevolent artists, teachers and sacred activists is needed to help humanity transcend our global crises.

### Neohumanism

Neohumanism is the philosophical base offered by P. R. Sarkar (1982) that pursues social equality and protects our most treasured inner asset of devotion. It is the combination of this devotional sentiment involving the love of all of creation and the pursuit of social equality that offers the needed solutions for many psycho-social ills that retard social and spiritual progress. Neohumanism is particularly well suited to the resolution of the psychological complexes that create social injustices and environmental degradation.

The psychological complexes identified in Neohumanism include the human sentiment that denies the existential value of animals, plants and the inanimate world; geo-sentiments that are based on attachment to place and socio-sentiments that involve attachments to particular groups. Geo-sentiments include geo-patriotism, geo-economics and geo-religion which confine people to a limited part of the world. Socio-sentiments include socio-patriotism, socio-religion, socio-economics, socio-art, socio-architecture and socio-literature that promote one’s own group or society at the expense of other groups or societies. There is a logical link between how these psycho-social complexes create havoc in our world that can lead to the environmental and socio-economic crises we face today. These geo-

sentiments and socio-sentiments are at the base of wars, ethnic violence and hegemonic economic policies that produce the divide between the “haves” and the “have-nots”. The human-sentiment that sees only the utilitarian purpose of animals, plants and environmental resources is largely responsible for our environmental crisis. All of these sentiments create a deadly chain of reciprocal events in which the destructive effects of attempts at dominating one another and the environment feed on one another.

To prevent or ameliorate these social and environmental scenarios the philosophy of Neohumanism offers rational mentality and study to counteract geo-sentiments and protospiritual mentality to counteract socio-sentiments. The implementation of rational mentality to counter geo-sentiments requires deep study of mundane and spiritual subjects. To eliminate socio-sentiments one needs to develop a protospiritual mentality based on the principle of social equality grounded in a collective activism. Sarkar (1982) says that this principle of social equality teaches that the basis of dharma or righteousness is the “collective march of all in unison”. We must remember that it is the writers, artist and teachers who lead this rational and collective march of society toward the social equality needed to rescue the equally threatened animate and inanimate world.

To effectively implement this march of society to correct the psycho-social sentiments that fuel the wars against people and the environment we will have to implement a NHE system to reach people of all ages. Sarkar states that to check the fighting currently going on among human beings requires “training the turbulent mind... with a proper education- not ordinary education, but Neohumanist education.” (Sarkar 1998 p 235) Sarkar (1998) warns that in order to achieve the establishment of this Neohumanist education; teachers, mentors and artists must be ever vigilant to helping society overcome dogmas in our individual and collective lives. Dogma is defined by as always supporting the principle of selfish pleasure as opposed to the principle of social equality which achieves unity and spiritual peace. NHE must go beyond imparting knowledge to inspiring a sacred activism towards social equality externally and a proto-spiritual mentality internally, leading to Neohumanism as a devotional mission.

### Tipping Point

To counteract the deleterious effects of these divisive psychological sentiments we must launch a NHE movement that can reach a critical mass

or tipping point of individuals who are touched in their minds and hearts by the knowledge of the indivisibility of creation. Ian Prattis (2002) suggest that this critical mass might be 2 million people who are meditating and have come to realize the unity of creation. On a practical level Sarkar suggest that “knowledge must be disseminated throughout all sections of society. The goal is to “liberate the intellect of each and every person.”

There is good reason to believe that today we are near the tipping point of a critical mass of people with a proper education and liberated intellect but as Paul Hawken (2007) and Paul Ray (2000) remind us these people don't know each other. Paul Hawken in his new book, *Blessed Unrest*, (2007) on the environmental movement states that this is the largest movement ever created in the world but the groups in this movement don't have a collective identity. Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson (2000) also indicate that progressive spiritually and environmentally oriented individuals identified as the “culturally creatives” in the United States don't know the “cultural creatives” living next door. Sarkar's (1966) activist slogan of “Moralists of the World Unite” obviously needs to be invoked to underline the urgency of need for collective movements to combat the global crises we face. What is needed is a galvanizing force for all the moralists of the world representing the culturally creative, environmental groups, educators and NGO groups working for social justice and environmental protection. Perhaps this galvanizing force is the sacred activism Andrew Harvey defines as, “the fusion of the mystic's passion for God with the activist's passion for justice”. Gandhi, Martin Luther King and P. R. Sarkar are modern examples of sacred activists who devoted themselves to the general welfare of society. Andrew Harvey (2008) states that “Sacred activism isn't anything new, but we need to bring an urgency and intensity to the message at this moment, because there is a worldwide addiction to money and power and a worldwide depression”. Sacred activism and Neohumanism both of which combine elements of the internal fire of devotion and the external compassion for social equality could provide the alchemy to produce the needed transformation of consciousness.

### Neohumanist Educational Response to Psycho-Social Crisis

A methodical and rapidly deployed plan for disseminating Neohumanist Education (NHE) is required to insure the needed shift in consciousness that supports the protection and proper utilization of our physical, mental and spiritual resources on our planet. As Peter Russell (1996) points out, band-

aid shifts in economic and environmental regulatory policies without a shift in consciousness will not create the needed shift in cultural life styles to make a difference.

Fortunately NHE has contributed to a new wave of consciousness around the globe by creating culturally and environmentally friendly schools in 80 countries. The spirit of love of learning and cooperation among students, teachers and parents of diverse backgrounds in the neohumanist schools around the world seems to insure generations of young people who will become planetary citizens. They become pen pals with children of different cultures and raise funds to help preserve wild life and the rainforest. In the Neohumanist schools of Croatia the children wrote and illustrated their own books with Neohumanist themes in the last four years which became a national book contest in which all their efforts were recognized by the larger community. At the Children's Garden School, a neohumanist school in the U. S., the children taught their peers and families the principles of organic gardening and proper recycling of goods used in their homes and communities. Children of NHE are becoming the leaders of a greener, more creative and more cooperative society of tomorrow. We come to recognize that schools are a nucleus of social, cultural and environmental renewal and need to be actively involved with the local and global community as its campus.

The proper education of children helps insure a bright future and must be pursued with great vigor as our long term goal but the urgency of our global socio-economic and climate change vectors push for a shift in consciousness among the present adult population of the world over the next two decades. This effort will require a large cadre of educators and activist working in schools of higher education and communities to deliver the message of social equality and proto-spiritual mentality.

The expansion of NH higher education for college age and adult populations is an immediate need. The early childhood education efforts among the NHE schools has produced several generations of young adults that gives this focus on higher education a jump start. While two neohumanist colleges, a liberal arts and a technical college exist in India, most of the current generation of NHE children don't have a NHE college to attend. This necessitates the creation of a NHE University with global campuses and distance learning technology. To instill effective NHE the value of direct contact with teachers must be preserved. Distance learning

can enhance but not take the place of the creative exchange between teachers, students and the learning environment.

Neohumanist education supports an integral education at the physical, psychic and spiritual level that is both knowledge and experience based. As Bussey (2008) implies it is the reciprocity and interdependency of consciousness and the real world of things that drives the educational process as teachers, students and culture interact. Neohumanist education deals directly with this paradox of the duality/unity of the subjective inner ecology and objective outer ecology. Embracing this continuum of internal and external consciousness supports the needed shift in consciousness from a “materialist” modern world view to a “pragmatic universalist” postmodern perspective.

The development of a NHE global campus university can be facilitated through partnering with existing schools of higher education and NGO's to share libraries (electronic and standing) and buildings, as well as sharing faculties, media and pedagogical resources. To create a NHE global university will take some years. In the meantime our able NHE college and university level teachers must go on making their impact upon adults and students in existing schools of higher education, seminar centers and international conferences. They must continue to apply action learning and action research approaches that involve the broader community in seeking a Neohumanist and sustainable future. These educators, futurist and activists must become the ambassadors of NHE education in the global community of higher education and NGO's.

The description of the comprehensive pedagogy of NHE schools and colleges has been detailed elsewhere (2006) and is not the focus of this paper. The intent here is to stimulate an ongoing discussion of how to institute a set of strategies involving identifying faculties, administrators and academic boards for developing neohumanist schools, seminar centers, distance learning laboratories, global campuses and modes of public education to create a new wave of consciousness that can counteract psychological complexes that foster our current global crises. At a more subtle level the creation of a critical mass of passionate and responsible educators/sacred activists produces representatives of this new wave of consciousness that spreads under the influence of what P. R. Sarkar called microvita (2005). These microvita, emanated by what he calls the “cosmic factor”, are the smallest members of the particle world. Sarkar states that,

“..... in the case of subtler microvita, they may move through ideas. A particular idea may get accelerated speed in a particular planet with the help of a few conceptually developed minds. That is, a great person with a great conceptually developed mind may spread his ideas with the help of these microvita throughout that planet, or even throughout this universe in different celestial bodies.” When Sarkar says that “there is a new wave of thought in the human mind” (1982) he may be inferring that these microvita are helping spread this new wave of thought, referred to as the devotional sentiment, that influences many receptive minds to develop a love of all of creation. The representatives of the emanations of this new wave of devotion are recognized by the individual and collective unity of their thoughts, actions and deeds.

We must call on benevolent writers, artists and educators to use the i all available means to spread this new wave of devotional consciousness in ever increasing circles to touch and awaken the conscience of the collective mind. For Sarkar (1982) “awakened conscience” is consummated in the discernment of what is best for the general welfare. Neohumanist and like-minded educators represent a vanguard of pioneers that are vibrating to the same anthem of “One Universal Mind”. It is the development of this new wave of consciousness that promises a just and sustainable future for all.

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