



# **Neohumanism**

## **A Renaissance in Education**

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**Neohumanism – A Renaissance in Education**

by Acarya Abhidevananda Avadhuta

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Dedicated to the greatest and,  
indeed, the only educationist for all time.

With grateful appreciation to Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, whose two books –  
*Human Society Part 1* and *The Liberation of Intellect – Neohumanism* –  
provided most of the inspiration for this treatise.

*In the transitional period of civilization, honesty in individual life is a prime necessity. We shall have to remain ever-vigilant that the darkness of petty self-interest may not shroud this supreme human treasure. With the very extinction of honesty, civilization too will not survive – the long spiritual struggle of the human race will go in vain, and all intellectual achievements will become just meaningless. The book knowledge that cannot be utilized in life bears no value.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti  
Ananda Purnima 1958*

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## Only Love

Seven thousand years ago a very great lady asked her husband if there be no easy way for the common people to attain salvation. Lord Shiva replied that, indeed, all they need do is to love God, and remember that all living beings are God's children. According to Shiva, if the ordinary people could just do that, then the rest of the work God would manage for them. Since that time, both sages and simpletons have been talking about Love. Virtually every great spiritual master has extolled the merits of it. All the well-wishers of society have ultimately pinned their hopes on it. Young and old; rich and poor; woman and man; Hindu, Moslem, Buddhist, Christian, and Jew; Black, Brown, White, Yellow, and Red – virtually everyone knows that the final resolution of all our individual and collective problems is to be found in Love.

And yet, curiously, today human society seems no better off than that primitive civilization of yore. In the hoary past, tribes clashed with each other as a result of clan conflicts. In the Middle Ages, millions upon millions died in crusades founded on religious dogmas. Today, nations go to war against nations on the pretext of some pseudo-ideologies. Indeed, at present, our global society would appear to be in a position more precarious than ever before. With super powers now calculating their military capacity in terms of “overkill” – weapon strength capable of destroying all life on this planet many times over – is there any real hope that humanity will be able to alter the course of human history by forming, finally, a stable and well-knit social structure? After so much agony and bloodshed, are we now to conclude that, at least so far as our collective existence is concerned, Love is nothing but an impracticable abstraction?

Today, not only is the situation desperate, but also most of the human race is in despair. The downgraded human beings of the world peer out meekly from their miserable hovels and wonder what new catastrophe each succeeding day will bring. And let us not be mistaken – it is not just in the Third World that we find an abundance of the poverty-stricken and refugees. Even in the so-called developed countries, the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen, still unabated by any of the tall talks about humanism, democracy, or dialectical materialism. And so long as this gross injustice persists, so long as the vast majority of the world's wealth remains concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority of the people, there can be no question of having established any kind of human society worthy of that name.

Selfishness is at the root of all our social problems. Selfishness is the only real reason that huge amounts of cash sit idle in some millionaire's savings account, while just outside the doors of the bank emaciated beggars hold out their crippled hands in mute appeal for a mere crust of bread. Isn't there a familial relationship between the rich and the poor? Are not the wretched people of the earth equally entitled to a reasonable share of the world's wealth? And are not those who hoard huge caches of money responsible, to the same degree, for the needless sufferings of the indigent masses?

Yes, selfishness is at the root of all our social problems. It is the rudimental cause for most of the injustice in this world. And it is the primary obstacle which must be overcome if we are to build a new society based on Love. Humanity today is motivated in every walk of life by the *Principle of Selfish Pleasure*, and that is the whole and sole reason why the world stands poised on the brink of destruction. When everyone is thinking in terms of *me first* rather than *we together*, there can be no question at all of any meaningful society, what to speak of a healthy society. If

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we are to eliminate all of the inequities, if we are to restructure our society on the format dictated by Love, then first and foremost we must replace the Principle of Selfish Pleasure with the *Principle of Social Equality*. And for social equality to be achieved, we must at least guarantee each and every person the minimum essentialities of life. The appalling gap between the rich and the poor must be bridged.

Nowadays, those who enter the arena to battle economic injustice soon discover that there are, and have always been, more than sufficient resources on this planet to satisfy the needs of everyone. As with the case of population, the main problem today is not quantity but rather distribution. Just as the population of this planet is tending to concentrate in smaller and smaller geographical areas, particularly in what demographers are now calling megacities, so also the wealth of the planet is tending to concentrate in the hands of fewer and fewer people. Actually the two problems are somewhat interrelated. However, with respect to the distribution of wealth, the plain and simple fact is that to raise the living standard of the poor does not take even a fraction of the energy required to lower the standard of the rich.

Faced with these circumstances – circumstances that have not varied much throughout the course of human history – human beings have thus far devised only two approaches to solving the economic problem. On the one hand we find the Robin Hoods and, on the other hand, the Mahatma Gandhis. Without questioning the sincerity of either of these two prototypes, it is nevertheless important to remark that neither group has been able to effect any significant change. Both have proved to be abysmal failures. But let us here analyze briefly these two approaches and, perhaps in the process of examining their defects, the correct and positive course of action will be revealed.

The Robin Hoods, as everyone knows, believe in seizing wealth from the rich and distributing it to the poor. At one time or another, in virtually every country of the world, this approach has been tried. Occasionally we have seen periods when the Robin Hoods attained political power. Indeed, this is roughly the situation in the Communist countries of the world today. But nowhere and at no time can we detect any significant decentralization of economic power. Even in the Communist countries, the *state capitalism* that has emerged barely conceals a new elite class whose luxurious lifestyle may be contrasted starkly with the penurious existence of the lumpenproletariat. Simple humanistic reasoning tells us that every individual should have equal rights –to the dot – relative to the basic necessities of life such as food, clothes, shelter, medical care, and education. Moreover, this concept is exactly what the Robin Hoods (and Marxists) profess to believe. Unfortunately, when it comes to the field of practicality, the Robin Hoods fall far short of this basic economic objective.

The first problem with the Robin Hood approach is that, even though it may temporarily reduce the bank account of the rich, ultimately it does not and cannot put an end to the capacity of the clever capitalist to amass personal wealth again. Second, the very nature of the Robin Hood approach tends to derogate the status of the common people to that of mere charitable recipients. We cannot say that these ordinary people become beggars, because even they do not need to beg; simply they must wait – generally in excessively long queues – for their masters to throw them a few bones. And, finally, the third defect we find in the Robin Hood approach is that violence of any kind tends only to beget more violence. In the past, it may be noted, most of those altruistic robbers ended up suffering more than the wealthy tyrants whose inconvenience they occasionally caused. Even in the Communist countries, despite the passage

of more than half a century since the proletariat revolution, those in power today spend much more energy trying to maintain their own advantaged positions than they expend trying to better the conditions of those whom they claim to be serving. Some persons may call the response of the intelligentsia to this brutal suppression a counterrevolution, but it seems a bit odd to give that unflattering label to their natural and justifiable reaction.

Violence may temporarily restrict the unsavory expressions of the individual and collective mind, but still the evil tendencies remain. Whenever the force of circumstances is relaxed, then once again those undesirable activities get expressed, usually in a form even more menacing than before. Thus we find that those who have sought or who seek to establish social parity by dint merely of brute force have always failed – and they will always fail. In this respect it makes little difference whether or not that physical force be supported by law.

On the other hand, the votaries of nonviolence, the Mahatma Gandhis, have fared no better. Here it should be clarified immediately that there is, in reality, no such thing as nonviolence. Life invariably depends upon application of force. The main difference between the Robin Hoods and the Mahatma Gandhis is that the Robin Hoods exert pressure primarily on the physical plane, whereas the Mahatma Gandhis prefer to exert pressure on the psychic plane. Nonviolence simply implies application of intellectual force. But those who depend solely on the magnanimity of human nature and, therefore, take recourse to moral appeal as their only stock-in-trade can never achieve any remarkable success in this world. Perhaps their emotive approach may penetrate a soft and receptive heart, but it does not make even a dent on the frigid minds of the heartless opportunists. Gandhism may be a paragon in the paradise of imagination but, in the real world, it appears to be little more than a bizarre form of self-righteousness.

So then, when neither physical force nor intellectual force can solve the problem, what is the solution? The answer is that we will have to take a two-pronged approach. First of all, we must create circumstantial pressure in order to free society from the stranglehold of that handful of exploiters who share direct responsibility for the sufferings of the common people. Here there is little point in quibbling over whether physical force or psychic force should be utilized for this purpose. While that debate would continue, an estimated one million people are starving to death each and every month. We must accomplish this task by whatever expedient means avail. So, for example, in a democratic state this end may be accomplished through appropriate legislation whereas, in an autocratic state, we may need to use coercion. But we must never forget that suppression invariably results in an undesirable reaction, unless that particular urge that we have checked can be channelized at once into another preferably more healthy mode of expression. Although circumstantial pressure may create an initial wave of righteousness in the minds of the people, to keep that initial wave vibrating in their minds and to avert any deleterious consequences arising out of the imposition of that circumstantial pressure, adequate arrangements must be made for disseminating moral education.

Moral education must not be confused with transmission of information that amounts to nothing more than government propaganda or an apologia for existing or new legislation. On the contrary, moral education will have to produce much greater results than such type of instruction can achieve. First of all, moral education must help people to recognize and reject as immoral all those activities that, for the self-interest of an individual or group, deprive another or others of the equal right for self-preservation and wellbeing. Secondly, moral education must inspire all people to proceed toward the ultimate subtlety, the point from which the question of

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degradation cannot even arise. With universalism as the cherished ideal of our collective life, and human perfection as the goal of individual life, moral education provides the suitable intellectual foundation on which humanity can make progress both individually and collectively.

Human desire is limitless, but some of the things human beings long to acquire exist only in finite supply. In this universe there are strict limits to the quantity of physical wealth that is available. For that reason the hoarding of physical wealth by any individual directly curtails the ability of others to enjoy the use of that particular property. However, in the mental and spiritual spheres, the wealth that one may aspire to possess is unlimited. Furthermore, the nature of possession in those spheres does not detract from others' enjoyment of that very same wealth; rather, it may actually enhance the opportunity of others to acquire a similar status. Thus, for the welfare of all, we must strictly regulate the accumulation of physical wealth; but, on the psychic and spiritual planes, people may be accorded complete freedom to develop themselves. And in order to avoid the dangerous psychological and sociological consequences of suppression, which may well crop up when the rights of people to hoard physical wealth are restricted, it will be necessary to channel the people's hunger for accumulation of greater physical wealth into a hunger for greater intellectual and spiritual wealth.

No long-lasting results can ever be achieved by coercion alone, or by legal compulsion. Our aim is to construct a harmonious society on the foundation of Love. And Love will also have to guide the way in which we lay that foundation; because, without Love, selfishness will certainly erupt once more, undermining all our diligent efforts. Love is the one and only basic ingredient for building a healthy society. Simply to create circumstantial pressure for the purpose of restructuring society can never be enough. In addition to restructuring society we must launch simultaneously a suitable program of expeditious education.

Not long ago I was talking with a highly placed civil servant about the social problems in his newly independent country. I mentioned a newspaper article in which one university professor had opined that the standard of honesty in the country was so low that any present government could never be capable of rooting out corruption or even of making any significant social progress. According to the newspaper article the only hope for this country is that, in some twenty years, the next generation might be better qualified to bring about the necessary moral regeneration of the country. Until then the people would just have to pull on as best they could, under the burden of a somewhat repressive military government. After referring to that newspaper article, I was quite surprised to hear the civil servant confide in me: "As you know I am not a military man, nor can I say that I support all of the strong-arm tactics of military rule; but I must admit that I have to agree with that newspaper article." In reply, I remarked that waiting for the next generation might also prove fruitless unless something concrete be done to ensure that today's children don't grow up as carbon copies of their parents. In other words, unless the present military government takes appropriate steps to remodel and refine the education system, then the most that we could hope to achieve in the future would be no more than a maintenance of the status quo – a dreary prospect indeed.

My brief comments appeared to have an impact upon that civil servant, but our meeting came to a close before I could do more than begin to outline the revolutionary neohumanist education system. This short book is intended to present that outline in a more complete form – a form that can be contemplated easily by those who may find interest herein.

It should be stressed that our concern here is not much with the ways and means of bringing about the circumstantial pressure necessary to institute this new system of education. By and large, that subject may be dealt with more conveniently elsewhere. In this book our primary topic is the nature of neohumanist education – the new education system that can make possible the establishment of a healthy human society on planet Earth.

One may ask why this education system is called neohumanist rather than simply humanist. In answer I must submit that a new age can be ushered in only by a new people. The education system that will develop those new human beings and that those new human beings will be happy to support is therefore neohumanist. Neohumanist education is both the product and the producer of a new humanity.

## Education

Everything of this universe is in motion, and that motion proceeds from crudity to subtlety, from imperfection to perfection. In the flow of evolution the ordinary and humble amoeba gradually gets elevated to the exalted status of a human being. Furthermore, that human being who used to live in a torchlit cave, and who traveled everywhere by foot, today resides in electrically illuminated highrises and rides most places in automobiles, airplanes, and spacecraft. Do all these changes come about by sheer chance? Absolutely not – behind all that transpires are the fixed laws of nature.

Natural law dictates that each and every entity of this world must have certain qualities and specific functions. Indeed, it is the fulfillment of these qualities and functions that not only differentiates one being from another but that actually allows us to recognize a particular being for what it really is. Milk is white and it nourishes babies. Suppose someone mixes up a combination of chalk dust and water. That potion also will be white, but it certainly is not milk, and it does not nourish babies. Similarly, something that is red may not be called fire unless it burns. A steel lightning rod may stand straight and tall, but it is not a tree because it is neither wooden nor growing.

Now the question arises – what is a human being? What are the special characteristics that distinguish humanity? What is the proper purpose of human life?

Many people like to define the human being as a “rational animal”. While this definition is not far wrong, it may, however, be somewhat misleading. Human beings have a more highly developed intellect than other living beings, and this more highly developed intellect may, indeed, be expressed in the form of rationality. But in today’s world, many human beings cannot be said to behave in a rational manner. Rather, they generally behave either instinctually or sentimentally, just like animals. Thus, we have the paradox of a “rational animal”.

Actually, animals are not rational by nature. If a human being behaves in a rational manner, then s/he<sup>1</sup> can no longer be called an animal. On the other hand, if s/he does not exercise rationality then s/he can no longer lay claim to being human. It is, therefore, important to note that rationality is not an inborn quality of human beings, but rather a sublime characteristic that humanity has the capability to acquire. It is the development and expression of rationality that distinguishes humanity from the animal kingdom. In short, rationality is the human being’s birthright, but not necessarily s/he’s endowment.

Another definition of the human being, less well-known but no less significant, is that the human being is that creature with divine potential. Many spiritual masters and religious traditions have expressed, in one way or another, that there is no significant difference between an ideal person and God. In India, the concept of *Nara-Narayana*, the Human God or Divine Human Being, is fundamental to almost all of that country’s rich and varied spiritual missions.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this book the contraction *s/he* (pronounced “shree”) is used for the purpose of a neutral pronoun denoting either a woman or a man.

Lord Shiva and Shrii Krishna were both recognized as God in human form. Gautama Buddha was also taken to be a fully emancipated human being. In the mythology of many civilizations, it is common to find that some human beings are elevated to divine status. Witness, for example, Heracles in the Greek tradition. In Christianity, we note that Jesus himself claimed to be one with God, and he also adjured his followers to “be perfect” even as God is perfect. According to Islam, Mohammed was a perfected human being. And so it may be said that human status not only carries the potential of rationality, but also it inheres within itself the promise of a supernal state of excellence. But, just as in the case of rationality, this promise of divinity is not so much an inborn trait as it is a potential to be realized and manifested. According to the age-old spiritual science of Tantra Yoga, the human form is considered to be a divine machine, because with that form a living being acquires the necessary tools to attain the supreme stance.

Now, in respect to the recognition of rights, it is important to mention again that these rights can never be mandated by legislation alone. While, no doubt, the recognition of rights is partially a legal affair, nevertheless it is primarily a collective psychological phenomenon. To facilitate progress in this regard, expeditious education ultimately is the only way. In every sphere of life – economic, social, mental and spiritual – to make human beings conscious of their rights is the most significant expansion of knowledge, and the full application of those rights is nothing else but the cultivation of science.

Regrettably, even today – one million years after human beings first appeared on planet earth, and some fifteen thousand years after the first expressions of human civilization – still we find that only a very small minority of the people have been accorded access to knowledge and science. Ideally, both knowledge and science should have been disseminated freely to all but, for whatever reason, this has never been done. So it is little wonder that, even in this Twentieth Century<sup>2</sup>, women and men still tend to be more instinctual than rational, more bovine than divine. To rectify this situation, the human race as a whole requires a new concept of humanity, one that does not classify human beings in the same category with animals. That neohumanist vision must enliven not just the minds of a privileged few, but rather the minds of each and every person. Today the world is in dire need of a new humanist education that will reach every doorstep like a lifesaving stream of fresh water.

The question may arise as to what actually is meant by education or, more precisely, who is it that we may accept as being well-educated. Some people would put forward literacy as the fundamental criterion for education. But, is literacy enough to qualify a person as educated? Are there not many very foolish people who know well enough how to read, but who have absolutely no capacity to analyze what they have ingested? And are there not many illiterate people who have a vast knowledge of some subjects about which even a university graduate may know little? An illiterate farmer generally understands much more about the agricultural capacity of land than nine out of ten well-read intellectuals. So then, literacy can not be the major determinant of an educated person; although it is certainly desirable that everyone should be able to read and write.

For like reasons, the measure of education cannot depend upon how many books a person has

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<sup>2</sup> Now Twenty-First Century.

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read. Even were we to adopt such a shallow criterion, still there would be no real way to measure one's standard. A school drop-out may have studied and even assimilated more books than a university professor, but how would we ever be able to recognize this?

Perhaps with the idea of facilitating measurement, many persons have suggested that we set the criterion for education in terms of school diplomas. But it is an undeniable fact that the degree-holder may have forgotten everything, unlearned everything, shortly after the examinations for which s/he had crammed. Mere memorization of some facts or figures, a tract or a treatise, is a very superficial form of learning, because there is no guarantee that one has really understood that which was memorized. And when one's memory of many subjects tends to disappear within a few days, weeks, or months after the final exam, then what is the real value of the diploma that one has earned and been awarded?

Some other people have disregarded all the above criteria and classified a person as educated if s/he evinces a show of refined taste or reserved manners. Obviously, for this criterion, one need not possess a college degree. Indeed, even an illiterate may imbibe all of the predominant qualities of civility. But, can we recognize this behavior as sufficient grounds to call a person educated? Here the answer remains the same as in all of the previous examples – absolutely not.

To give a refined look to everything is civilization; and, no doubt, civilization is intimately connected with education. But we must not forget that the identity of a human being is not confined to s/he's external demeanor alone, but is rather much more reflected in the pervasiveness of her or his large-heartedness. In this light, it becomes clear that what generally passes today in the name of refinement, civilization, or education is nothing but sheer hypocrisy. Dissembling and theatrics have become the mainstay of refined behavior, but that certainly cannot be accepted as true civilization or education. When visiting another's house, many dainty dishes are commonly offered for one's consumption. But there are some persons who, feigning delicacy, always refuse to take more than a bite or two. It may be noticed that quite frequently these same persons, upon returning home, immediately proceed to the kitchen and there give way to unrestrained gluttony.

Suppose one has seen another person falling into a ditch. As per the modern code of civilization, one is obliged to say, "Oh, I'm sorry", but it is not at all necessary to enquire if the other person be hurt. Even if one should make such an enquiry and then discover that, indeed, the other person is not right, still it is not really incumbent upon one to go out of one's way to actually help that other person.

There is one country in the Far East where people become extremely effusive in apologizing for any injury that they may have intentionally or unintentionally inflicted upon another. But the real purpose behind this dazzling display of contrition is not caring – it is simply to avoid litigation or revenge by the injured party or s/he's family. It is in no way indicative of real warmth of heart.

In every society of the world today, the main feature of so-called civilization is hypocrisy, and the inspiration for that flagrant dishonesty is the all-out pursuit of selfish pleasure. To take any constructive step for the eradication of others' problems, to bear the burden of another's troubles – this might jeopardize, to some extent, one's petty self-interest, and so only lip service is required. Certainly the learning of such type of manners cannot in any way be equated with

education, not in any meaningful sense of the word.

We repeat – what then is education? And who is it that we shall accept as being educated? The answer really is simple. Education is that which liberates. As human existence is trifarious in nature – that is to say, physical, mental, and spiritual – a proper education must teach one how to lead a healthy life in all three spheres. To be considered well-educated, one will have to learn much, remember much, and make regular use of this learning in practical life. That is the only criterion. For this real education, one need not be literate; one need not go through many, or even any books; one need not collect a degree from some prestigious university; and one need not be acquainted with all the rules of modern etiquette. Beyond a doubt, knowledge of the alphabet, reading of books, university or college instruction, and an awareness of social norms – all have the power to contribute immensely to the process of education, but none of them, taken alone or even together, can be accepted as the final determinant of who is well-educated.

An erudite scholar once took a ferry across the river. On the first half of the journey, the scholar plied the boatman with one discourse after another. About midway across the river the scholar remarked, “Thus far, my good man, you have not been able to answer even a single philosophical question that I have raised. It seems that half of your life has been wasted.” Just then a sudden storm arose, and when it appeared certain that the boat would soon capsize, the illiterate and untutored boatman bluntly asked the scholar, “Do you know how to swim?” The scholar replied with considerable alarm, “No, sir, I have never learned swimming.” At that, the boatman could only remark, “Well then, it now seems to me that your whole life has been wasted.”

## **Teacher and Student**

No matter what the learning, the intelligence, the features, the virtues, the rank or the age may be of an individual, still one should remember that the person whom one thinks to be inferior to oneself may actually be superior in some spheres. No one should become vain about any mundane matter, including one's degree of education, for even that person whom one may look down upon as being uneducated might have a far greater knowledge than oneself in some respects. Keeping this point in mind, an intelligent person should always try to broaden the scope of s/he's knowledge by endeavoring to learn more from every experience, and from every person s/he meets. The truly wise do not put on airs; rather, they maintain the attitude of a good student, ever ready to learn something new.

Still, from a social viewpoint, it would not be possible to have any community of students with no teachers. Thus it becomes necessary for specific individuals under particular circumstances to adopt the role of teacher. The way in which a teacher carries out s/he's responsibilities will, of course, depend on the nature of the circumstances. In this respect we may distinguish principally three groups of people who, in one way or another, are obliged to play the part of a teacher.

First of all, there are the professionals – those who are employed in our teaching institutions such as kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools, colleges and universities<sup>3</sup>. On their shoulders rests the primary responsibility for dispensation of knowledge, application of science, inculcation of discipline, and provision of all the prerequisite qualities for united efforts in social life.

Secondly, there are the parents and guardians. Much of the responsibility for moral and spiritual education belongs to them. Moreover, the main responsibility for acquainting the child with the world devolves also upon the parents and guardians. The society generally receives the child in the same state and with the same outlook as the grooming of that child by the parents or guardians has molded her or him. Thus, it is commonly found that most people tend to maintain the same social, political and religious opinions as their parents.

Finally, there are the writers, the actors, and the artists. They have the capability to inspire children with high ideals and, to some extent, they may even be able to retrieve those children who have started down the wrong path due to an adverse home or school environment. These writers, actors, and artists play a strong supporting role for the professional teachers, as well as for the parents and guardians. Through fact and fantasy, music and film, they bring to life in the minds of the students those very lessons that otherwise might have seemed overly dry or virtually incomprehensible.

But if there is a need for proper coordination between the third category of teachers and the

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<sup>3</sup> It may be added that there is also a small group of professional teachers who provide the service of spiritual instruction. These persons may be found in every walk of life, and they are mostly effective by the example they set. As they are few in number and cannot be identified by any mundane occupation, we will not be discussing their role in this book. However, this omission should in no way be taken to belittle their outstanding contribution to the field of education, and their unparalleled importance for the human society.

other two categories, then there is probably a still greater requirement for coordination between the first two categories. This is due to the extensive areas of similarity in their respective functions. Of course, the professional teacher must carry out s/he's duty by different means than the parent or guardian may use, but the subject matter imparted is frequently the same. Not only with respect to homework, but rather especially in matters relating to the good character of a student, it is highly desirable that there be frequent and forthright communication between parents and teachers. Already we find many "Parent-Teacher Associations", and it is to be hoped that these PTAs will become even more widespread and efficient. When child-raising is accomplished by means of a harmonious understanding between teachers and parents or guardians, then clearly the scope for a more effective education increases enormously.

Occasionally it is found that the teacher must perform the dual role of classroom instructor and guardian. This occurs in situations such as boarding schools, reformatory schools and prisons. But these cases are a bit abnormal and somewhat unnatural. In general, the two roles are separate. There is no alternative but to encourage a healthy understanding and coordination between the professional teachers and the parents or guardians, so that no confusion should arise in those areas where their respective duties tend to overlap.

At this point, questions must arise as to the requisite qualifications for being a good teacher and how the entire educational system should be administered. Actually these two questions are largely interrelated and, at times, it becomes difficult to distinguish them. So let us examine these questions simultaneously, still maintaining distinction of the three categories of teachers in so far as it is relevant.

## **Professional Teachers**

While selecting professional teachers, society must have a care that they possess not only the requisite educational background but, in addition, such other qualities as strength of character, moral courage, service-mindedness, unselfishness, personality, and leadership. In order to make selection of the finest of instructors possible, the rate of teachers' salaries will have to be increased. Certainly the remuneration due to teachers should be at least comparable to, if not more than the amount accorded to officials in the judicial and executive departments. Without such a positive incentive it will be extremely difficult to attract a sufficient number of highly qualified persons to fulfill the requirements for professional teachers.

But can a high standard of education be guaranteed just by the fact that one has employed good teachers? And is the provision of a proper salary to those teachers enough to hold them responsible for training students to become ideal human beings? To both of these questions the answer is No. A good teacher, if s/he is underpaid, may have to divert so much of s/he's valuable time and energy for the purpose of supplementing s/he's income that s/he may be unable to work with proper efficiency in the classroom; but even a good teacher who is well paid may still be somewhat paralyzed by improper or inadequate educational policies. So, if the professional teachers are to be made to bear their share of the responsibility for shaping ideal citizens (as indeed they should be), then not only must these teachers be adequately paid, but they must be given the right to determine educational policies. No good result can be expected if teachers are utilized only as machines for imparting a specified training.

It is important to note that the practical exigencies of school administration must not be allowed

to interfere with the educational process. Sometimes influential or rich parents may try to arrange some special advantages for their children. Such display of favoritism can corrupt the entire school atmosphere. So, to prevent this from happening and to ensure the policy-making rights of the professional teachers, some well-meaning persons have recommended that school administration should also be controlled by the professional teachers. However, this proposal is a bit impractical. Those intellectuals who have the inclination to become professional teachers generally do not have any penchant or skill for mundane affairs. It is preferable that some professional executives should be engaged to take over the material aspects of school administration, and these executives should be given the responsibility, so far as possible, for providing the optimal educational environment as outlined by the professional teachers. In this way, the quite mundane side of educational administration will be managed more efficiently, and the professional teachers may be somewhat immunized from worldly cares, leaving them free to devote their full mental energy to the noble task for which they had been selected.

## Parents and Guardians

Regarding the second variety of teachers, the parents and guardians, the subjects of qualification and administration are a bit delicate. There can be no question of selection of parents in the same way as professional teachers can and should be selected. However, it is certainly desirable that parents and guardians be worthy of the sacred responsibility of child-raising, which child-bearing normally entails.

To impress on the child a healthy and benevolent conception of the world, the most important thing that parents and guardians must encourage is a practical idealism. To accomplish this task, parents and guardians require two special virtues – self-restraint and good judgement. Regrettably, not all parents (or guardians) possess these qualities and so, in the case of children of unrighteous and depraved parents, the entire society will have to take responsibility for their grooming. And, wherever possible, in extreme cases such children should be withdrawn from the malignant parental environment.

In all fairness it should be mentioned here that not only professional teachers require some degree of immunization from the cares of the material world but, indeed, every human being requires this to some extent. Actually, the urge for economic security is a major reason why human beings prefer to live together in a society. Thus it will certainly be unreasonable for society to look down upon those poverty-stricken parents whose minds are completely absorbed with the problems of earning a living, often by any means. In such cases, society has no right to castigate these people, should they fail to properly discharge their parental duties. It would also be inhumane for anyone to remark that, if such persons had insufficient money to start off with, then they should not have had so many children in the first place. This comment disregards completely the social, economic, and psychological factors prevalent in the poorer countries of the world, and often in the poorer sections of the more developed countries as well. In reality, poor people often perceive children as a potential supplement to the family income, as well as economic security for the future when, being too old to work, they will have to rely on support from their progeny. So, before sitting in judgement on the deplorable condition of child-raising in the poorer portions of society, we will just have to find ways to guarantee every single human being the economic security of having the minimum basic requirements of life, including the wherewithal to afford the best possible education for s/he's children.

## **Litterateurs, Actors, and Artists**

Finally we come to the third category of teachers – the litterateurs, actors, and artists. Already we have mentioned that this third group of teachers plays a tremendously significant role in respect to supporting the work of the first two groups. But it should be stressed here that their role is not always positive. The well-written biography of a great personage can prove to be highly inspiring in a positive sense. But a cheap detective or adventure novel, some purely nationalistic propaganda, or commercialistic trumpery, while these may attract the minds of youth or even adults, still have the capacity gradually to divest people of whatever prudent judgement they might otherwise have possessed.

Youngsters like to imitate their favorite actors and musicians. Thus, a popular actor or actress, songster or songstress has great capacity to influence the public, not only through the medium of s/he's art but also by virtue of s/he's example. Writers, actors and artists greatly impact every area of our social existence, not excluding politics. Witness, for example, the case of the United States, where a former film star has just won reelection to the highest political post in the land by a plurality almost unsurpassed in the two hundred year history of that great nation.<sup>4</sup> So, if society wishes to maintain a high standard, it must exercise a subtle but careful control over those who are allowed to perform. Though it may be an unpopular thing to suggest, still for the welfare of the entire society, there is no other recourse but to compel writers, actors, and all artists to lead a moral life. No matter how great a talent they may possess, those of them who reveal themselves to be depraved will have to be sent off to reformatory schools, after being deprived of their right to exhibit their artistic skills.

Of course, one may here enquire as to who should take such a hard decision. It would be dangerous to invest such a power in the government, for government might be tempted to abuse that power in order to gain petty political advantage. Furthermore, government officials cannot be expected always to possess appropriate knowledge of the arts to make a balanced decision as to what therein is healthy or unhealthy. In matters such as exhibiting rights, the selection of exhibitory themes, and anything else directly concerned with art or its performance, it will be best if the artists themselves take the decision.

In matters relating to the regulation of the teaching profession, it is desirable that some ideal professional teachers be in charge. In matters relating to the regulation of parental duties, it is desirable that a social board composed of ideal parents and guardians should have control. And in matters relating to the regulation of cultural activities, a cultural board composed of ideal and culturally endowed persons should have the final say. This would ensure that the experts in all the different categories of education will have sufficient freedom to maintain a high standard in their respective areas.

Finally, it should be noted that many good authors, artists, and actors have been compelled to produce rubbish in order to make financial ends meet. So, if society is to demand a high standard of artistic excellence from its actors, artists, and writers, then society must also take the appropriate steps to guarantee their financial solvency. Some persons have suggested that, since

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<sup>4</sup> The reference is to Ronald Reagan.

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### *Teacher and Student*

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it is most desirable for the artistic community to be independent in respect to all matters concerning the arts, it would be advisable to manage all mundane affairs connected with the arts on a cooperative basis. Unfortunately, here we run into the same sort of problems we found with the professional teachers. Artists tend to let their minds wander a bit far from the hard realities of existence, and they often lack the practical intelligence required for managing such a cooperative enterprise. Therefore, it will be better to leave these mundane matters of ordinary administration in the care of some local autonomous bodies, which may ideally be assisted by the state government. Salaries should then be fixed according to the abilities and maturity of the artist, keeping in mind her or his individual circumstances, for example the size of s/he`s family. Bonuses should be distributed whenever a net profit is earned, and certainly some funds should be set aside to provide for pensions after retirement from active creativity. But again it must be stressed that in all matters directly concerned with the standard of art, artistic exhibition, and the artists themselves, the artistic community must be given a free hand.

One last point must be made here regarding the news and entertainment media, for example, radio, television, newspapers, comic books, and so on. All of these outlets have tremendous potential for use in an educative fashion. But there is also the possibility for abuse should these communication forms come under the control of private or governmental ownership. Hence it is desirable that society entrust the management of the various news-cum-entertainment media to specially selected boards of non-political, cultured educationists.

## Curriculum

Earlier we have stated that the real purpose of education is to liberate human beings in all respects. We have indicated also that it is most important for society to provide a moral education that can transmute a large portion of the mental cravings for physical enjoyment into an intellectual and spiritual hunger. There is, herein, no intent to deny this world as the staunch idealists tend to do, nor to smother the higher faculties of the human mind as materialists tend to do. We contend simply that the mind requires an object in order to exist, and unless the mental faculties be deflected toward higher realms of thought, they will normally keep themselves enmeshed in contemplation of material enjoyment, which situation is healthy neither for the individual nor for society. While both crude and subtle desires originate within the mind, people normally find it easier to gratify their physical desires, because the motor and sensory organs provide substantial help in this area, whereas these organs are of lesser value in the intellectual sphere and no value in the spiritual sphere. This point becomes especially meaningful when one considers that people, for the most part, have never been given proper training in the techniques related to introspection.

The process of imparting education is ideally a coordinated endeavor involving all three categories of teachers – the professionals, the parents, and the artists. Nevertheless, it is in the schools under the supervision of the professional teachers that the overall effect of these combined efforts may most easily be monitored, and it is in the schools that all aspects of education may best be encouraged. So, with the aforementioned clearly in mind, it would be foolish to conceive of a school curriculum that comprises nothing more than the stock subjects of mathematics, history, biology, and the like. Rather, our expanded vision of education will have to incorporate compulsory scholastic training in such additional matters as morality, logic, and discipline. Currently the most complete available neohumanist curriculum is to be found in the Ananda Marga schools.<sup>5</sup>

In the Ananda Marga school system, the word *education* has been converted into an acronym to express the goals that education should ideally fulfill. Thus we have:

E – Enlargement of mind

D – D E S M E P (Discipline, Etiquette, Smartness, Morality, English, and Pronunciation)

U – Universal outlook

C – Character

A – Active habits

T – Trustworthiness

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<sup>5</sup> Ananda Marga is a socio-spiritual organization established in 1954 by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, also known as Shrii P. R. Sarkar, for the dual purpose of self-liberation and service to all.

I – Ideation of the Great

O – Omniscient grace

N – Nice temperament

Let us examine each of these points in greater detail.

## **Enlargement of Mind**

It has often been said that you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink. This adage applies also to the field of education. In actuality, one human being can never really teach another human being anything. The only thing that a teacher can do is to create circumstances that enable another person to learn something.

Here it should be mentioned that knowledge is not some entity that exists outside the human mind but rather it exists within the mind. A book may contain words which, if understood, become knowledge, but the words themselves are not knowledge. And so, whenever one learns something new, one only awakens a formerly dormant potentiality within one's own mind. In truth, the acquisition of knowledge is not so much like the addition of new furniture in one's house as it is like the appendage of an entirely new wing to the house. New knowledge does not fill up the mind; it enlarges the mind.

Now, this process of enlargement of mind may occur as a consequence of three different and distinct causes – physical clash, psychic clash, and attraction to the Great. By struggling with the external environment, by making efforts to discard outmoded ideas in order to accept newer and more scientific concepts, and by striving to achieve or to realize something great in one's life – in each of these three ways one manages to grow mentally. A neohumanist education must provide maximum opportunity for psychic enlargement by means of all three of these stimuli.

## **DESMEP**

### **Discipline**

Discipline is a rudimental prerequisite for making united efforts in collective life and also for achieving one's own personal progress. A proper education will inculcate in the student both of these forms of discipline. It is germane to note here that discipline may be imposed by external pressure or aroused in the form of an internal urge. Undoubtedly, in education both methods must be used; but when discipline is observed not only as the result of circumstantial compulsion but also in adherence to the dictates of one's conscience – that is to say, when discipline has been internalized – then that is the ideal situation.

In external life society must move ahead together. There will quite naturally be some amount of external pressure needed to ensure that no individual interests are allowed to supersede the collective welfare. (At least this is the case in an ideal society.) However, no matter how strict the social laws may be, they never can never be so exacting as the rules of conduct involved with one's personal discipline. A proper code of conduct on the individual level should not only uplift the individual but also facilitate s/he's observance of social laws and enable s/he to

become a model citizen. This assumes, of course, that the social laws are morally based. Should there be a conflict between human law and cosmic law, then it is the cosmic law, dictated by conscience, that must take precedence.

In the neohumanist schools of Ananda Marga, yoga health practices are offered for maintaining and enhancing physical health, mental equilibrium and expansion, and spiritual wellbeing. It may be added here that the Ananda Marga schools also provide an after-school program known as STUVOL (Student Volunteers), devised on a format somewhat similar to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. STUVOL is very helpful in fostering discipline, etiquette, smartness, morality, and the like.

### **Etiquette**

As has been mentioned, refinement of behavior is intimately connected with the advancement of civilization, which, indeed, is interlinked with a progressive education. However, a system of etiquette that bespeaks nothing but selfishness or hypocrisy is a sign neither of higher civilization nor of higher education. Hence, while instruction in etiquette must be imparted, the social norms to be encouraged should be based on personal honesty combined with a sincere desire for the welfare of others.

### **Smartness**

Smartness starts with a working knowledge of the practical aspects of day-to-day living, such as personal hygiene and local geography; but this learning can be extended to all areas of knowledge. Many people think of smartness in terms of a snappy physical appearance, and this is not wrong; but appearance is just one expression of mental acuity. Ultimately, smartness depends upon the speed with which one is able to learn new things, and this process of learning relies heavily on three basic factors: perception, inference, and authority.

These three – perception, inference, and authority – are invaluable tools for learning. Most people tend to be lazy about using their minds, and so the power of inference (which depends mainly upon recollection and contemplation) is largely ignored. Indeed, even the power of perception is often disregarded. Most people simply go through life like sheep, blindly accepting whatever the various authorities tell them. Unfortunately, the authorities are sometimes right and sometimes wrong. To be fair, even one's own perception may be mistaken, and logic also has its limits in respect to acquisition of knowledge. Still the intelligent person will prefer to use all three tools as much as possible so that s/he may extend s/he's field of knowledge to the maximum.

Here it may be added that throughout human history it has been a rare occurrence when schools really tried to develop all-round smartness in their students. By and large, most so-called educational institutions have been content with conveying a minimum of functional information amalgamated with a maximum of social, political, economic, and religious propaganda. But the actual purpose of education is to set people free; and, if people are to be liberated intellectually, one of our primary concerns must be to make them independent.

No person should believe something just because it is written in the newspapers or even in Scriptures, or taught by some accepted authority on any particular subject. Of course, authority

## **Neohumanism – A Renaissance in Education**

### ***Curriculum***

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is a good starting point for knowledge and one may well be, and even should be, receptive to what has been taught by sages past and present. However, one must also be able to think for oneself. Every person should try s/he's best to verify information by means of s/he's own observations and experiences, as well as by the inferences that may be drawn from those personal observations and experiences, and from the observations and experiences of others. In this respect, no one can deny the tremendous support that logic can provide in the process of learning. Furthermore, logic is not at all a difficult subject to master. If one can learn mathematics, one can also learn the basics of logic. But, strange as it may seem, it is a very rare school that teaches logic on the primary or secondary level, and there are few universities, if any, where logic has been included as a compulsory subject. But, because rationality is a fundamental aspect of neohumanism, our neohumanist schools must endeavor to train children in logic from the very youngest age. Along with reading, writing, and arithmetic we will have to teach logic and reason. The three Rs must be extended to four Rs – reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic, and rationality.

### **Morality**

Nowadays many people are confused as to what is morality. They imagine that morality is some vague (or even specific) code of conduct outlined in one or another religious scripture. But morality is not a set of rigid dogmas. Morality is a living force, the practice of which can lead human beings toward the ultimate truth, the supreme knowledge, through the medium of better intellectuality. This morality can be understood by the fact that it creates a sense of mental equilibrium while simultaneously inspiring one to proceed toward the final desideratum from where the question of degradation or even further elevation does not arise. Morality is not the goal of life – it is the base, the only sure foundation upon which a human being can construct a genuine and fulfilling human existence.

Morality is not something external to a human being. It operates from the realm of intellect, and its function is to guide the intellect toward free thought. So logic and reason play a big role in understanding morality; and, indeed, only that person who has developed the power of rationality can really observe the finer points of spiritual morality. A simple or dogmatic moralist thinks, "I can not tell a lie", but a spiritual moralist realizes that there are circumstances under which the only way to promote the welfare of others is to conceal or distort the facts. Realizing that the spirit of benevolence must take precedence over a mere mechanical regurgitation of information (something even a computer could do), the spiritual moralist prefers benevolence to factuality whenever a conflict between the two arises. This is just one example of many.

One further thing must be said here about morality. Morality must be carefully distinguished from the concept of virtue, as in virtue and vice. It may be noted that in different places and at different times, different communities adopt different concepts of virtue and vice. The standards may vary considerably around the world. So, for example, in Japan suicide is accepted as a respected and virtuous tradition, whereas in England suicide is commonly believed to be a great sin. Now, if we disregard customary beliefs and apply just the yardstick of rationality, then one will treat all that which makes the mind more magnanimous, allowing the person to apprehend more and more of this universe as one's very own, to be virtue; and that which makes the mind morbidly selfish will be taken as vice or sin. The region where roams the mind of one engaged in virtuous acts is heaven, and that place where the mind of a sinner races about in wild frenzy is hell.

## **English**

Just to satisfy the political bias of a particular government, it is in no way reasonable to overburden young children with a heavy load of compulsory languages to study. It would be far better if the unbridled beast of nationalism be reined in to some extent so that everyone, recognizing clearly the need for global solidarity and, therefore, a global lingua franca, will accept what is already the de facto situation. At present English is the world language, and so English should be made the first compulsory language to study. In addition, children should be taught their mother tongue. This policy applies to the kindergarten and early primary school levels.

Of course, our policy in respect to language instruction must be adjusted to conform with the varying conditions in different parts of the world and in different communities. Thus, for example, many parts of Africa that were colonized by France still speak French as a national lingua franca. In those countries children will have to be taught three languages – English (the global language), their mother tongue (that is, their tribal language), and French (their national language). But the introduction of French may be delayed until the middle of primary school education. It is desirable that English should be the medium of instruction for all non-language subjects.

Like it or not, English is presently serving the function of a global lingua franca, and there is no other language that can soon replace it in this role. Of course, this will not continue as a permanent condition. In times to come, other languages will no doubt also rise and fall as the world language, just as French did prior to the emergence of English. If some people would prefer to create an artificial language to serve this global purpose, they are welcome to try, but it will take some time before that language has acquired the vocabulary and popularity to replace English. Neohumanists, as practical people, prefer to live in the present.

Some people object to the idea that children should learn only two languages. The point here is not that they should learn only two languages but that the learning of only two languages should be made compulsory at the earliest stages of the child's education. If the thirst for linguistic knowledge be properly awakened in students, then there is no reason why they should not learn five, ten, or even twenty other languages in addition to English and their mother tongue. If we have as many optional languages as possible available for students to study in schools and colleges, and universities, that will be a very good arrangement – one to which nobody could object.

## **Pronunciation**

In learning and applying any language, proper pronunciation is a critical factor. Without a same or similar pronunciation, two persons trying to communicate in the same language will have difficulty in understanding what the other is saying. This is particularly noticeable with respect to English. A North American may have some difficulty in understanding a Britisher; the Britisher may have difficulty understanding an African; the African may have difficulty understanding an Australian; the Australian may have difficulty understanding an Indian. Because human communication these days is still largely verbal – that is, our oral communication is still more important than written communication, and psychic communication has not yet been developed on any large scale – therefore we will have to take particular care to

teach proper pronunciation. And this is especially true in respect to the global lingua franca.

## **Universal Outlook**

It has already been stated that one of our fundamental social aims is to substitute the Principle of Social Equality for the Principle of Selfish Pleasure as the guiding inspiration in collective life. Actually this is the essence of universal outlook. To perceive human society as one cosmic family and to extend that family to include all of nature, both animate and inanimate, is the ideal vision that neohumanism wants to encourage. Neohumanism always upholds a rational approach to life, but what is rationality? In brief, rationality is no more than the combination of logic and a universal outlook.

When one accepts the concept of social equality on the basis that all objects of this universe – animate and inanimate – are nothing but different forms of the one Supreme Consciousness, then this indeed becomes an elementary form of meditation. Of course, the responsibility for instruction of young children in specific spiritual practices rests primarily with the parents and guardians. So it would be inappropriate for school teachers to instruct, or arrange for the instruction of their students in spiritual practices without the prior consent of their parents or guardians. However, professional teachers would not at all be exceeding their authority by trying to impart a universal outlook as a fixed item on their agenda.

One further point should be mentioned, and that is that today many people are clamoring about women's rights, civil liberties, animal liberation, and so on. These issues can never be resolved simply by legislation, because the problem goes deeper than law. Actually what is involved is not so much the restoration or provision of rights but rather the recognition of rights. Thus, the only solution is a proper education that reflects in all respects the universal outlook incorporated in the Principle of Social Equality.

## **Character**

Good character may be expanded to cover more than just morality. A neohumanist education seeks to encourage such additional qualities as personal forgiveness, magnanimity of mind, perpetual restraint on behavior and temper, moral courage, aloofness from criticism and groupism, sense of responsibility, and so on.

## **Active Habits**

Although most aspects of the physical side of life, such as diet, come largely under the control of the guardians, still it is quite possible for a school environment to discourage laziness and encourage active habits in the children. This may be done through the use of outdoor sports and different classroom games. Active habits may also be developed through the medium of extracurricular activities as, for example, the STUVCL program that has already been mentioned. But, however this is encouraged, active habits are an important objective of the education process to which professional educators must pay close attention.

## **Trustworthiness**

Undoubtedly trustworthiness is an element of good character, but it is not at all an easy habit to acquire. If we examine the people of the world, we may break them down into C, B, and A categories according to two systems. According to the first system, the A-class person says what s/he thinks and does what s/he says. There is no duplicity in her or him. The B-class person does what s/he says, but there may be some discrepancy between what s/he thinks and what s/he says. The C-class person thinks one thing, says another and does still something else.

As per the second system, a C-class person never undertakes any good or difficult task, because the mere contemplation of the probable obstacles to come are enough to daunt her or him. The B-class person may start a good work but, as soon as problems arise, s/he gives it up. The A-class person starts the work at the appropriate time and in the appropriate fashion, faces any and all obstacles that arise while carrying out the work, and perseveres with the work until it has been properly completed.

To be fully trustworthy, it is necessary that one imbibe the qualities of an A-class person as outlined in both of these systems of categorization. Thus, a neohumanist education not only strives for the expansion of honesty and simplicity but also for that high-spiritedness which inspires one to declare, “I have come on this planet to do great deeds for the physical welfare of all, for the psychic happiness of all, and for the spiritual elevation of all. Together with all other neohumanists, I will lead human society from darkness to light, from bondage to freedom.” It is no ordinary reliability that the neohumanist education wants to engender. Verily the goal of these schools is to develop an entirely new breed of people – towering personalities capable of saving this planet and absolutely worthy of humanity’s trust.

## **Ideation of the Great**

This goal has a clear relation to enlargement of mind, because one of the main principles of mental development is that one becomes as one thinks. However, ideation of the great extends beyond the mere enlargement of mind; for, ultimately, it is this ideation that is the main force leading one to perfection. Human beings tend to set their own limitations. If one repeatedly thinks, “I am a sinner”, then that very ideation will cause one to become a sinner. Even if was not a sinner before, one will become a sinner in consequence of that negative thinking. So neohumanist schools do not give any indulgence to negative thinking. Rather they always encourage students to maintain at all times both a high ideal and a high ideology in life.

## **Omniscient Grace**

From one point of view, life can be seen as nothing but a bundle of misunderstandings. Whenever there is a proper understanding of another person’s position, one cannot help but develop real sympathy for that person. When there is a proper understanding of one’s own condition and that of the world one lives in, a person develops the capacity to conduct s/he’s life in a proper fashion. So, in order that people may live their lives to the fullest, they will have to acquire encyclopedic knowledge. Neohumanist education by and large opposes any kind of early specialization in education. Everyone should know everything and then live accordingly. This is what is meant by omniscient grace.

None of this should be taken to gainsay the social need for some degree of skill training and job specialization. This need is an objective reality in the present-day world. However, the first priority of neohumanist education is placed on giving students the broadest possible education. People are more than their occupation. It is relatively easy to prepare someone to go through life as a mechanic or an architect. It is much more difficult, but much more valuable, to prepare someone to live as a well-rounded human being.

## **Nice Temperament**

Finally, an ideal person must be able to attract others by the sweetness of s/he's personality. So our education process should also develop in the student all of the elements of a radiant and charming personality. One's voice should be as sweet as honey and one's demeanor should be naturally smiling. The neohumanist must be a good leader, and a good leader is that person who can inspire others to be disciplined and to work without their ever feeling any external compulsion. A nice temperament is one of the major factors that makes this type of leadership possible.

## **What Is Missing?**

In conclusion it must be admitted that the use of the word *education* as an acronym is certainly a bit arbitrary. Had there been a different combination of letters in the word, my presentation of the goals and curriculum in a neohumanist school would also have been, of necessity, somewhat different. So let it be clear that this presentation is not intended to delimit or even to fully define neohumanist education. Its purpose is only to provide insight into the nature of a neohumanist school, to display neohumanist education from a broad angle of vision.

What has been presented in the format of the acronym E.D.U.C.A.T.I.O.N is fairly complete, but others may conceive of some points that have been omitted. Conspicuous by its absence is the word *love*. One may well ask why it is that a neohumanist education does not endeavor to teach love, especially since we have already accepted the principal that love is the fundamental prerequisite for establishing a healthy society.

The answer to this question is simple. Love is not something that can be taught. Love is not a subject like biology, nor a thinking process like logic. Neither is love a spiritual practice like meditation, nor even a spiritual law like the principles of morality. As love is not mechanical (that is, it cannot be turned on or turned off like a light switch or a water faucet), it is therefore impossible to teach anyone how to love. Moreover, we cannot even teach what love is or even fully what love dictates, because love transcends intellect. If the person has not yet experienced love, s/he will be unable to really understand or follow love. This is a little bit like trying to describe the taste of chocolate. Words cannot come close to the actual experience of eating it. A law or principle is meaningful only if the person can understand what one is intended to do and how to do it. It is also desirable that the person should have the wherewithal to comply with that law. But, for most people, love does not fulfill any of those requirements. Tomorrow a child will have grown up to be a neohumanist capable of supporting the burdens of this entire planet, but today we will have to teach that child how to carry buckets of sand.

Actually love is not listed as any of the lesser objectives of education, because love is the overall

objective of education, the very goal of life. Love is not to be found as an element of E.D.U.C.A.T.I.O.N simply because love is the sum total of all those items. Add up E.D.U.C.A.T.I.O.N, and one gets Love. And, although love cannot be taught in any ordinary sense of the word, it can be cultivated if one goes about this in the right way. Indeed, that is ultimately what a neohumanist education is eminently qualified to do.

## Methodology

Whenever talking about curriculum and, even more particularly, about methodology, there is always the danger that day-to-day policies will become confused with guiding principles. Should this take place, then there is every possibility for dogmatism to replace rationality.

Everything in this Universe is changing with respect to the three relative factors of time, space, and form. No two entities are exactly the same, and no single entity can remain unchanged from one minute to the next. Hence, while trying to materialize any high-minded program in life, we must maintain a degree of flexibility in our style of implementation. This is especially true in regard to matters of curriculum and methodology in education.

In the last chapter we have pointed to an obvious example of this problem in the preparation of curriculum. Although all of the concepts associated with the acronym E.D.U.C.A.T.I.O.N were founded on principle and are applicable in the neohumanist schools of the world, nevertheless the reference to English the D (DESMEP) is, in fact, a policy, not a principle. The principle is to teach the global lingua franca as the compulsory first language in all neohumanist schools. As today English is that global lingua franca, our policy for the world is to teach English. But global or not, long-term or short-term, still English will some day give way to another language; and, in that day and age, the policy in our neohumanist schools will have to change. If policy does not change, if English be retained dogmatically despite the zeitgeist of that future era, then that education process could no longer be called neohumanist.

In the preceding chapter, we were mostly concerned with the neohumanist principles associated with curriculum. In this chapter, we will be discussing the neohumanist principles associated with educational methodology.

Without a doubt, the teachers themselves are the most important *method* in neohumanist education. First and foremost, we must ensure a sufficient number of highly qualified and benevolent-minded teachers. As there is much variation from place to place, time to time, and person to person, it is not possible to dictate all of the policies on a global or even a regional level. Of course, some policies may be global and others regional. Each and every student is unique. Each and every teacher is unique. So it is absolutely necessary to allow sufficient leeway to the teachers in going about their work. Through use of personalized methods, the teachers will feel more inspired to develop the full potential within themselves and within their students.

Thus, to a large degree it is desirable that teachers determine their own methods of education. This increased creativity on the individual level will also accelerate the development of the educational science as a whole. Of course, that creativity must in no way work against any of the general principles of neohumanist education; and, as a matter of discipline, it should conform with the various policies that have been laid down locally for the purpose of achieving the greater welfare for all. However, keeping in mind the dictates of ideology and the need for structural discipline and structural solidarity, teachers must be given maximum scope for creativity.

Now how will these professional teachers go about their task of teaching? It may be observed that in many schools knowledge is administered like quinine tablets. The teachers simply stand

at the blackboard and dictate the facts that students will be expected to regurgitate at their next examination. The students, on their part, merely copy down or repeat what the teacher has written or said. Like this, both students and teachers simply endure hour after hour of classes that are nothing but painful drudgery. Later, fearing the adverse consequences should they fail their examinations, many students try to cram those dry facts into memory so as to receive a passing mark (or high score) on the exams. To be blunt, this is not education – it is stultification. What a child learns in association with fear may be recalled so long as the stimulus of fear remains, but soon after the grounds for fear have been removed, all will be quickly forgotten. That is why one finds so many persons who graduated with honors from prestigious educational institutions but who can remember hardly anything at all of the subjects that they studied there.

Education should by no means be associated with fear or administered in a dry and mechanical way. Rather, a thirst for knowledge must be awakened in the minds of students and, in order to satisfy that thirst, an adequate and proper instruction must be supplied. Only in this way can we provide a worthwhile education that will be conducive to the students' physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing.

## **Student Psychology**

Earlier it was remarked that knowledge is not something external to one's own mind; rather, it is internal. Just as butter is produced by churning milk, so also wisdom is attained by churning the mind. To encourage students to churn their minds, to awaken a real thirst for wisdom in them, the teacher's approach must be greatly psychological. In this connection, the psychology of students can be broken down in terms of their different age groups.

Some educationists have estimated that as much as 80% of a person's learning capacity has been lost by the age of six. So these earliest and formative years are extremely vital. When a child is but an infant (up to about the age of six), the primary way to awaken her or his thirst for knowledge is through games. Early education in nursery and kindergarten must be imparted through the medium games and still more games.

Here it should be noted that in virtually all conditions, games rely on a type of sensory-motor training that is an invaluable aid to learning. A simple example of this that relates to all ages is found in the process of studying. Many people have noticed that if they study while reading aloud from the textbooks, it becomes easier to concentrate the mind on the subject, and the concepts become more easily fixed in the memory. The reason that this is true lies in the fact that one is engaging more than just the sense of sight in the learning process. While reading aloud, the eyes are seeing, the mouth is speaking, and the ears are hearing. Both sensory and motor organs are at work. Thus, in respect to children's games, it will be helpful to engage as many of the child's motor and sensory organs as possible.

The infant's mind is also a bit partial to stories. So, to some extent, s/he may be taught through the medium of stories (for example, history and geography). The infant may also be initiated into a very simple form of spiritual ideation, which consists essentially of a cosmic outlook that embraces this entire universe as one's home and all beings of this universe as one's extended family. (Here it must be stressed that coordination with guardians is essential to avoid confusion.)

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Between the ages of six to twelve, the child's appreciation for games and stories becomes about equal. So both of these mediums must be used to the fullest advantage. Also in this period, an elementary meditation technique involving ideation on the Supreme Being may be taught, and this may be incorporated into the daily routine. Again, it must be noted that this type of program requires consent from the parents or guardians.

From about twelve to eighteen, a vision of the future starts to appear on the horizon of the teenager's mind. Therefore, in this period of life it will be best to impart education through the medium of idealism. Here it must be well understood that, in the better interests of both the individual and the society as a whole, this idealism must not give indulgence to any kind of narrow-mindedness. In particular, it must not tolerate any kind of geographic or social sentiments. All beings of this universe must be recognized as kindred to one another – all worthy of equal love. While giving a free rein to idealism, teachers must be very careful not to let any dogmas creep in, for dogmatism has the capacity to infuse in people's minds inhibiting complexes such as inferiority, guilt, and fear. This point may be noted specially in respect to the need for emancipation of women and the provision of equal rights to all minority groups.

It must be added that in many of the newly independent countries, attempts are quite noticeably being made to propagate nationalism along the lines dictated by the respective ruling parties of those countries. In some cases the federal governments want to discourage the different tribal, provincial, or communal sentiments that they consider to be a threat to national unity and patriotism. However, in respect to the overall goals of education, nationalism is every bit as detrimental to the child's mind as communalism, provincialism, and tribalism. Nationalism substantially vitiates the growth of the child's embryonic power of judgement. Thus, if the national leaders sincerely wish the welfare of their people and their country, they will always avoid nationalistic propaganda. Of course, in many of the underdeveloped countries of the world, the after-effects of colonialism and the ongoing effects of neocolonialism have left the people crippled by a deep-rooted inferiority complex. To overcome that problem, the people's native culture must be firmly supported. That is why, for example, our current neohumanist policy is to teach only two compulsory languages in the first phase of education – the mother tongue and the global lingua franca. Here it must be emphasized that, in this respect, a country's geopolitical boundaries are often totally irrelevant.

One final important point must be made concerning the psychology of teenagers. In their early teens, children reach the stage of puberty. This is quite natural, and there is nothing to be said against it. However, at this point in time the physiological changes in the human body lead to a tremendous curiosity about sex; and that curiosity can become a mental preoccupation that hinders the larger interests of a broad education. Hence, it is preferable during this stage of education, in what is generally classified as secondary school, to apply the maxim: out of sight, out of mind. Therefore, in neohumanist schools, coeducation is permitted up to the secondary level and on the college or university level; but on the secondary level, when children are aged from twelve to eighteen, segregation on the basis of gender is preferred.

After eighteen, the youthful mind becomes somewhat more realistically inclined. And so, past the age of eighteen, students must be educated by means of ideorealism – a mixture of idealism and realism that relies on a subjective approach with objective adjustment. While maintaining high ideals we must nonetheless be very practical in our methods of implementing them. It is this practical side of life that now holds equal interest for the child of eighteen or more. This

ideorealism is effective for educating *youth* even up to a very old age. Of course, after the attainment of middle age (about 45), one's ideals have become relatively fixed; but still it is not at all impossible to expand even an adult's ideals should it be necessary. In any event, it is still most effective to present all practical instruction against the background of healthy ideals.

It must be stressed that, in this last phase of formal education, the element of realism must never be lost to view. This applies with respect not only to what is taught but also to how the teaching takes place. In the poorer segments of society and in the case of educating adults, appropriate arrangements must often be made so that students can "earn while they learn". This need may be satisfied through training in immediately lucrative trade skills. In other words, the training itself is a type of apprenticeship for which the student may receive some remuneration; or the training might be accommodated by adjusting the hours of classes to the work schedule of the students.

## **Criminal Psychology**

Finally, a few words should be devoted to a special category of student psychology, that is, criminal psychology. Prisons should be developed on the model of reformatory schools, and prison administrators should be persons educated both as psychologist and teacher. So it is necessary to examine the nature of different types of criminals and how these different types of criminals may best be reformed.

For the prevention of crime it is very important to provide an adequate education to everyone, especially training in morality and inculcation of higher ideals. Even children have some basic human rights, and one of those fundamental rights is to receive an adequate education, comparable to what other children may acquire. Keeping this point in mind as well as the undeniable social benefits accruing to an equitable distribution of knowledge and science, it will be best if the provision of formal education is viewed not so much as a parental duty but as a social duty. Of course, to some degree, this is already the case; but here again special emphasis must be given to the economic side of education. As children are taken to be economically dependent on their parents, the only way that society can assure every child's right to an adequate education is to accept the entire costs of education as a collective responsibility. Education should be provided to all children absolutely free of charge. In other words, parents should not have to bear any additional expenses or loss of income for each child whom they send to school. This is not the case at present. Should society operate in this fashion, the result would manifest in many quite obvious advantages, not the least of which would be a tremendous reduction in the incidence of crime.

Still, to be realistic, some amount of crime must be expected even under the best of circumstances. The reasons for this are as many as the different types of criminals. Generally, for correction of criminals a proper education in morality and the means to attain moral strength is required. However, let us now examine in more detail the ways in which this education may, or even may not apply to the reformation of the different types of criminals.

First of all, some persons take to a life of crime as a result of genetic disorder. No matter how severe their crimes may be, we must still recognize that those crimes were committed in consequence of physical and psychic disease. Doctors quarantine infectious patients, and so also society must segregate the born criminals. But, after installing them in a penitentiary, it is our

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duty to go about trying to rid these persons of their disease. For this formidable task, we will require the services not only of psychologists but also of sociologists and physicians. We may not be able, even with the best professional services, to get fully the desired results, because modern medical science is not yet sufficiently developed to detect and eliminate those physical abnormalities that are responsible for mental aberrance, and the fields of psychology and sociology are yet in their infancy. But all diseases have been and may be cured through the intensive practice of spiritual meditation, and so it is desirable that born criminals should develop an interest and be instructed in meditation. To encourage them in this direction, the prison environment must be made more pure and more humane.

The second category of offenders is those who have become hardened or habituated criminals. In their case, crime has become an addiction. Because the problem is not congenital, a physician is not required for their treatment. But because crime has become a part of their nature, they serve as a very bad influence on others. Like the born criminals, the habituated criminal must be isolated from the rest of society and even from the other categories of criminals. To reform them, what is needed most is adequate moral education, adequate instruction in how to attain moral strength, and detention in strictly controlled reformatory surroundings.

Next are those who become criminals due to their environment. In this case, the problem is neither physiological nor psychological. It may be that nothing was wanting even in respect to their education. These persons became criminals due primarily to the people with whom they chose or were compelled to associate. For example, it is sometimes found that parents are the real parties at fault for some cases of juvenile delinquency. Whenever the cause of crime is found to be purely environmental, the presiding judge need not resort to any elaborate corrective measures. It is simply necessary to take the help of sociologists to extricate such offenders from their undesirable company or conditions. Of course if, as the result of long practice, the criminal by environment has become a criminal by habit, then appropriate steps will have to be taken as noted in the aforementioned group. While we may certainly regret the circumstances under which these individuals took to the path of criminality, nevertheless there should be no dilution of the requisite treatment. Such leniency would reap no positive benefit either for the concerned individuals or for society as a whole. We must remember that the neohumanist steps recommended to reform criminals are essentially corrective, not punitive in nature.

The next category of criminals is those who become affected by a temporary criminal urge. Whether the criminal impulse be obsessive (for example, kleptomania) or whether it be the consequence of a unique stimulus (for example, a crime of passion), whether it be expressed immediately (for example, in a state of temporary intoxication) or whether it be expressed after much brooding and even careful planning (for example, a calculated revenge) – still, all of these cases fall under the category of snap volition. The individual involved may have shown no inclination toward criminality and, moreover, there may be no serious physical or mental abnormality. Generally the underlying cause for these crimes is nothing but mental weakness. In such situations, society may have to include some penalty as part of the corrective measure. Paying the penalty can help to relieve the guilt of the contrite criminal, and the fear of punishment will help to restrain many weak-minded persons from giving free rein to their baser faculties. It may be added that, as correction is our primary purpose, there can be no question of capital punishment, that is, the death penalty. Capital punishment is as absurd as decapitating oneself in order to cure a headache.

Lastly, the vast majority of criminals are those who have become criminals out of necessity. In a very few of these cases a well-to-do person becomes indebted as the result of an intemperate life-style and thereafter adopts some anti-social activities with the express intention of clearing those debts. In such cases society is certainly not responsible for their privations, and so corrective measures must be taken against these offenders. The main avenue of reform here is to rid these individuals of their intemperance. But the very great majority of crimes born out of want are not so easily dismissed. Most of the crimes in the world come under this category, and most of those who commit these crimes do so as the result of an abject poverty for which they cannot be held solely responsible. In such cases, it is not the individual alone who is culpable, but rather the entire society is also and even more at fault. Hence, society has no moral right to take corrective steps against these individuals without first making adequate efforts to reform itself. This topic has been referenced in the first chapter, and it was given as a major reason for revamping the entire educational process along neohumanist lines.

## **Setting an Example**

Leaving the specific educational problems associated with criminology and returning to the more general topic of overall teaching methodology, there are a few more important points to be made. A high ideology cannot be communicated by emotional appeal to any form of petty sentiment. The only effective way to convey high ideals is through the medium of logic and reason. Therefore, the approach taken by neohumanist teachers must always be grounded in rationality. Teachers must express the spirit of benevolence scientifically through logic and reason.

It may be noted that all people, but especially young children, are both impressionable and imitative. Students learn much from the example set by their teachers, and so there must be no duality between the words and the actions of a neohumanist teacher. It is the duty of teachers to discourage all kinds of bad habits that their students might be inclined to pick up. But, for example, if a teacher tells her or his students about the evils of cigarette smoking and drinking of hard liquors and then is seen by the students in the teachers' lounge with cigarette in hand or caught coming into class with alcohol on s/he's breath, this situation can only breed a perverse reaction in the minds of the students. They will generally lose their trust in the teacher. Thinking that the teacher only wanted to conceal a good thing for her or his personal enjoyment, they will be even more eager to try for themselves the practice of smoking or drinking. In this way also, some students might develop the habit of being deceitful. Therefore, it is very important that the words and actions of the teachers (and the guardians as well) must tally, and there should be no careless misrepresentation of facts (for example, telling a child that a coveted piece of cake, set aside for oneself or for a guest, has been finished).

This principle of setting a proper example applies in many areas of education, and that is why it is so important to select a high standard of teacher. One case in point relates to the question of discipline. It is incumbent upon the teacher to instill discipline in the students. However, to accomplish this, the teacher must set a good example. S/he must be disciplined s/herself. As stated earlier, neohumanist schools are segregated on the secondary level. To justify that segregation, it is also desirable to maintain a segregated teaching staff. Thus, it is generally found that neohumanist schools are either male-managed or female-managed, and on the secondary level girls are taught exclusively by women and boys are taught exclusively by men.

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Another example of this type of discipline relates to school uniform. The wearing of a school uniform helps to instill a sense of discipline, smartness, and unity in the students. But if students are expected to wear uniforms, then why not teachers? So, in neohumanist schools, both students and teachers have their respective uniforms to wear.

Another point in respect to discipline and example relates to school politics. In many educational institutions it is found that two or more groups exist among the teachers, each trying to draw the students into their fold. The teacher of one group may try to generate in the minds of their group of students a disposition of disrespect toward the teachers in the other camp or camps by speaking ill of those other teachers. The net effect of such action is a flagrant state of indiscipline. Children are set one against the other, and in their minds a corrupt sense of politics is instilled. This badly disrupts proper learning. Therefore, all teachers must guard themselves strictly against this type of intra-organizational politics. Politics, by definition, is not at all a harmful affair; but, in the context of the present-day world, it seems reduced to little more than an instrument for mutual mudslinging.

One final point on the subject of discipline relates to the question of enforcement. Some people hold the opinion that corporal punishment should be prohibited. Of course, psychic punishment is much to be preferred over physical punishment, and no doubt the extent and manner of physical punishment must be strictly controlled. But is it not a fact that some types of psychic punishment can be more painful than a rap on the hand or across the posterior? Is it not also a fact that some students, especially very young children, simply do not respond to purely psychic treatment? Thus here, too, it would be a mistake to impose any dogmatic policy. Again, the key factor is the example of the teacher. Before imposing any punishment, the teacher should have won the confidence of the students by her or his loving conduct, and at no time and under no circumstances must the quantum of punishment given by the teacher exceed the quantum of love that the teacher has for the student. If this principle be followed, then a teacher may use psychic punishment or even, in some cases, physical punishment, and no harm should accrue thereby. But here again it must be emphasized that school policy on the extent of punishment that may be administered by teachers will have to be understood and accepted by the parents and guardians in order to be effective. Always in respect to this delicate matter, there must be a healthy communication and coordination between the teachers and the parents. While the impartation of discipline to children is a primary responsibility of the teachers, teachers do require from the guardians a considerable amount of moral and, occasionally, even physical support in this respect.

## **Attitude**

Before concluding, let us look briefly at the question of proper attitude of teachers toward their students. In an earlier chapter, it was stated that the truly wise person always maintains the attitude of being ready to learn something new. It was also remarked that nobody should have any vanity in respect to the amount of their knowledge or any other virtues. Here it is important to stress that from a cosmic point of view, we are all of us children of the same one Mother/Father. Teachers must always remember that, whatever may be the age of s/he's students – infant, child, adolescent, youth, adult, or aged – all are still children; and the teacher, too, is a child like them. With this in mind, it would be inappropriate for the teacher to stand aloof from s/he's students or to put on an air of forced gravity. This type of act tends to undermine mutual good relations; and, in the absence of mutual affection, there can be no free

and healthy exchange of ideas. Due to the absence of a loving relationship, many children heartily wish for the death of their obdurate teacher or even of an oppressive parent.

Feigned aloofness also leads to a type of dishonesty that hampers the educational process. Every teacher occasionally makes mistakes, and those mistakes are often pointed out by the students. If the teacher expects the students to be open to learning, then once again the teacher must be ready to set the example. Should a mistake be made by the teacher, and even should it go unnoticed by the students, as soon as the teacher realizes her or his error, s/he must honestly admit the error and try to rectify it. Honest acceptance of a mistake in no way lowers the prestige of a person; rather, it enhances prestige. And, from an educational point of view, it is one of the best ways to encourage a greater morality and rationality in the students.

## **Student-Oriented Education**

Finally, some aspects of the education process must be molded for the convenience not of the teachers (nor of the parents) but rather of the students. Some examples of specialized methodology have already been mentioned in respect to adult education. Another instance in which special care and creativity becomes significant relates to grading. It should never be forgotten that students go to school and sit for examinations in order to pass. Every student wants to pass, and this also should be the desire of every benevolent-minded teacher. While some systems of grading may foster a healthy competition conducive to the students' accelerated progress, other techniques used may actually stifle the learning process and lead even to severe psychological disturbance in students. It is found that some teachers and some schools have adopted the policy of predetermining the percentage of passing marks that may be awarded, and use of this approach is highly lamentable. What is the harm if everyone should pass? So while scoring examinations, it would be much wiser for teachers to spare themselves the trouble of being over-critical on each fine point. That which matters most is the range of knowledge that the student possesses and s/he's ardor to know more.

Certainly more may be said on the subject of methodology, as is indeed true about all of the topics dealt with in this treatise. There may yet be questions about skill and trade training, and teaching of the handicapped, the mentally retarded, and geniuses. There may yet be questions about dealing with the diverse psychologies of students of the same age group and questions about daily routine, class duration, and homework. More questions may arise concerning the teacher-student ratio, the use of monitors, and the functions of a school principal. Every teacher will surely be able to draw up a long list of questions of the "what do you do when" variety. But this book is meant only as an outline of the principles of the neohumanist education. It is not intended to serve as an exhaustive analysis. Indeed, it is doubtful whether such a complete study will ever be possible, for always there will be new circumstances and new problems with which to cope.

If there be a genuine desire for the welfare of students and society, the solution to all problems can be found. But for those who still seek concrete answers to any or all of the above questions or more, who wish to know any or all of the current policies in respect to neohumanist education, or who want further clarification on any of the points on education contained in this book, please visit or contact any Ananda Marga school.

## **In Practice**

Today humanity is facing a global crisis that threatens the very survival of humankind on planet Earth. The people of this world have no alternative but to construct a new society in which all human beings will march ahead together, hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder. But in order to establish such an ideal society, we must first elevate humanity to the standard of neohumanism. In this undertaking, this sacred mission, there is a conspicuous dearth of individuals ready to take the lead. The suffering humanity have, as usual, deposited their desperate hopes with the prominent political leaders of the world, but in this endeavor the political leaders will not and perhaps cannot be of any help. During the past six thousand years of recorded history, politicians have proved themselves to be utter failures at virtually every step. At this critical point in time, it is certainly unwise for us to rely on their leadership. We must hope only that these politicians will now resist the temptation to continue making and enforcing decisions in every walk of life.

A new leadership is needed urgently today. That leadership must be a new humanist leadership. The mere acceptance of ideas does not qualify one as a neohumanist or as a leader. To proceed on the path of social progress, a neohumanist leader must couple neohumanist ideas with an enduring strength of will. Theories alone can never be the salvation of society. The supreme competence that can emancipate human beings – individually and collectively – is found only in leadership which keeps open and unbarred every small and big vista of sentient existence – that vigorous competence which alone can materialize a harmonious synthesis of the hard realities of life and the highest human ideals. This synthesis is the eternal truth in every sphere of human existence.

It has been demonstrated clearly that none of the traditional solutions to society's problems can succeed. Human society cannot be redeemed either by means of brute force or by way of moralistic appeal. Even those who choose the recommended middle path of combining circumstantial pressure with expeditious moral education will fail if they lack the appropriate means of eliminating from within their own minds the germs of selfishness. Ultimately they too can be corrupted by power or the lust for power. Inevitably they will associate themselves with the crude and cruel politics of violent suppression. History indicates that those who set out to build a benevolent society must first undergo a meticulous preparation and self-discipline. Otherwise, they foreordain not only their own downfall but also disastrous consequences for the entire human race.

At the beginning of this book it was stated that a neohumanist education is both the product and the producer of a new humanity. Those who want to lay the foundation for a new humanist society must lead the way first and foremost by setting an example of neohumanism. Whether one be engaged in the efforts to create necessary circumstantial pressure or in the endeavor to provide a neohumanist education, in either case the leader must acquire those qualifications requisite for success, the abilities needed to attain a good result. Everyone should understand full well that neohumanism is not just a philosophy of life. Neohumanism is a state of being achieved by a three-stage process.

In the first stage, there is a powerful and scientific spiritual practice that enables one to overcome the many obstacles on the way toward human perfection. This spiritual cult is

physico-psycho-spiritual in nature. It is founded on and capable of founding the spiritual aspirant in both rationality and a fully universal outlook.

The second stage of neohumanism comes about naturally as a consequence of the spiritual practices of the first stage. In the second stage, unit and collective psychic structures undergo a progressive metamorphosis. Casting aside the Principle of Selfish Pleasure, both the individual and society realize the essence of true spirituality – the Principle of Social Equality. In this second stage of neohumanism, one develops an ever-increasing sense of closeness to that cosmic nucleus which is the immanent principle not only within oneself but within everything outside oneself.

Finally, in the third and highest stage of neohumanism, pure love becomes a blissful reality in one's life. One develops a real affection for that which one perceives to be intimately related to oneself. As the individual has already developed an intimate feeling for the Supreme Being in the second stage of neohumanism, it can be only a short time before s/he will also experience actual love for the Supreme. This divine love is not like any ordinary human sensual attraction. In the case of ordinary passion, one's affection is somewhat selective, but with respect to this divine love, one enjoys a sweet association with each and every atom and molecule of the universe. In this last stage of neohumanism, one's spirituality, which formerly had been elevated from cult to principle, gets exalted to the lofty status of mission. The same social service that first one had performed mechanically for the sake of one's own development, and later had accepted as a duty dictated by one's conscience, now stands revealed as the most natural human expression, the unmistakable and inescapable purpose of life. In this final stage of neohumanism, the inner and outer worlds merge into one joyous reality. This Earth, with all of its attendant difficulties, becomes one's personal paradise.

Again and again, it has been maintained that the sole and basic ingredient for building a healthy society is love – an honest sympathy for all living beings. It should be clear now that, in practice, most people are not just born with this type of love. Generally, most of us have to take up a well-regulated spiritual discipline in order to cultivate such love. Those who want to do something for suffering humanity, those who want to take concrete steps to create a healthy human society, should contact the nearest neohumanist center for personal instruction in the spiritual practices that are essential for self-development and the welfare of all.