

Reading Material for PCAP Study Circle:

Guidelines for Using Study Circle Material:

All of the material in this study circle syllabus is taken from P.R. Sarkar's books. A study circle can be composed of PCAP members and non-members or a combination of both. It is suggested to cover one chapter per session. Some chapters are shorter so in some cases two chapters may be covered in one sitting.

At the end of each chapter are some sample study circle questions on the topic just read. Feel free to invent other questions that may enliven the discussion and lead to a deeper understanding.

Feedback and suggestions to info@pcap.ws are very welcomed.

1. Animal and Plant Rights

“The formation of a World Government will require a world constitution. A charter of principles or bill of rights should be included in such a constitution and encompass at least the following four areas. First, complete security should be guaranteed to all the plants and animals on the planet.” (1)

“The third psychological loophole is that there is no law against the indiscriminate destruction of flora and fauna due to the absence of Neo-Humanistic sentiment. In the Cosmic Family of *Parama Puruśa* (Supreme Consciousness), humans, animals, plants, and inanimate objects exist together and maintain a harmonious balance. However, human beings, because of their superior intellect, are indiscriminately destroying plants and animals for their own narrow, selfish ends. In the constitution, there is no provision for the safeguard of the plants and animals. In a constitution, there should be safeguards for the lives of plants and animals. The absence of such provisions in the constitution creates psychological loopholes which should be corrected without delay.” (1)

“There are disparities, disparities of different types and different kinds. For instance, there are biological disparities existing in the society, which are being encouraged by certain selfish persons. The biological disparity between human and animal, between human and plant, between animal and plant – that disparity must not be there. Just as a human being wants to survive, a pigeon also wants to survive – similarly a cow also wants to survive, or a tree. Just as my life is dear to me, so the lives of created beings are also equally dear to them. It is the birthright of human beings to live in this world, and it is the birthright of the animal world and plant world also to remain on this earth. To recognize this right, and to get it recognized by the entire human society, the Renaissance movement will have to do something concrete.” (1)

Human beings have learnt to feel the pain and agony of other human beings, but when a dog grieves nobody pays any attention to it. It is as if people think that dogs do not suffer any pain. When human beings come to understand that animals also experience pleasure and pain they will acquire a new dimension of wisdom. It is because of our human sense of duty and our higher understanding that we should be sympathetic to all living beings. (1)

As a general rule human beings should not kill animals under any circumstances. The exception to this rule is when human life is in danger. For example, if you are confronted by a tiger which threatens your life, before it attacks you may be forced to kill it. Similarly, if lions, snakes, elephants, etc. enter your locality, then as a last resort they may have to be killed to ensure human safety. But animals should only be killed when they directly endanger human life. It follows from this that you should not kill animals in their natural habitat. In the forests there are many lions, tigers, snakes, etc., but such creatures should not be killed in their natural environment because there they pose no threat to human life. Although it is the nature of some tigers to attack human beings, all tigers should not be killed simply for this reason. We must not forget that it is also the duty of human beings to build sanctuaries for dying animals and endangered species of animals and plants. This is the practical approach of the living philosophy of Neohumanism. This is the approach of Neohumanism to animal and plant life.” (1)

“At present human beings are thinking about their own minimum requirements more than about the minimum requirements of animals and plants. A day is coming when some of the animals, if not all, will come within the realm of our social membership. Today we say that each and every human being will get the minimum requirements. Tomorrow we will say that the minimum requirements will also include the needs of dogs, cows, monkeys, etc...The earth is not only for human beings, it is for other living beings also. So we will have to do something for them. The minimum requirements and maximum amenities should also be given to animals. Today cows, dogs and monkeys are developing; tomorrow more and more animals will be in this category. Animals will also develop longings for different psycho-physical pabula, so they should be guaranteed minimum requirements and maximum amenities too. We will have to do something for them also. This is the demand of Neohumanism, of Neo-Humanistic ideas. This demand should be fulfilled by PROUT.” (1)

“At one time people were told that this world is for human enjoyment only, so the existence of all the plants, of all the birds and animals in the world is intended merely to provide objects of enjoyment for human beings. Their hopes and aspirations, their intense desire to live, their pains and pleasures, their affectionate family or community lives are simply without value. However much a baby goat may wish to live, the main consideration is how much meat that kid carries on its frame.

This defective philosophy has made people ruthlessly violent – even more dangerous than bloodthirsty tigers. Tigers kill only to fill their stomachs, to preserve their physical existence; whereas human beings kill animals mostly out of greed. Generally people have resorted to hypocrisy to camouflage this instinct of greed; they killed animals on the pretext of pleasing the gods, while actually their main motive in doing so was to please their own tongues. These are all the inevitable results of such defective philosophies.” (1)

Study Circle Questions:

1. If you were a lawmaker in a future World Government, name three laws that you would get enacted to protect the rights of animals and plants.
2. What “psychological loopholes” are created if a constitution lacks provisions for the protection of the rights of animals and plants?
3. Can you think of any examples of people who exhibit a new sense of wisdom through their recognition of the suffering of animals? What are some of the qualities of that new dimension?
4. Would PCAP support the sport of hunting? Explain
5. What would you consider to be a minimum requirement for an animal? A plant?
6. What would you consider to be a maximum amenity for an animal? A plant?
7. What examples can you think of in the animal world where they demonstrate affectionate family and community lives?
8. What philosophies justify the killing of animals to please the gods? How can they be changed?

2. Vegetarianism

“For each and every living entity one’s personal life is the dearest thing. One loves one’s personal life very much. This is the rule, this is the characteristic of all living beings. But those people who understand this sentiment of living beings and love others with the thought, “I should not kill, I should not give them any trouble because they love their life as much as I love my own life”, are true sádhus and those who lack this sentiment are not sádhus, they are asádhu. Preaching the gospels of peace, and at the same time slaughtering chickens, is not a proper thing for a sádhu because the one who kills the chickens loves his life and the chickens also love their own lives. So that man lacks the universal sentiment of love. He is not a sádhu. A sádhu must be vegetarian.” (2)

In the non-living world there is mind but that mind is dormant, as if asleep, because there is no nervous system. Hence, the nonliving world cannot express its grief when it is damaged or destroyed. To protect the inanimate world you should conserve and properly utilize all natural resources.

The Neo-humanist policy to ensure the well-being of all creation is to first serve human beings, then animals, then plants and then inanimate objects. Human beings should not kill the creatures of the animal kingdom just for their own survival. If a man kills a cow so that he may live, then why not let the cow live and the man die? Let the man die! Why should a cow die for the man? If cows symbolise motherhood, are those humans who drink cows’ milk calves? Buffaloes and goats also provide the milk which humans drink, so are they also peoples’ mothers? Human beings should stop killing cows out of respect for higher forms of life, not because of the sentiment which respects motherhood. The slaughter of buffaloes and goats should also be immediately stopped for the same reason. (2)

“Vegetarians produce more lymph because they get chlorophyll from grass and other green vegetation, and that is why their brains are more developed than those of non-

vegetarians. Those who consume animal protein [neglecting green vegetation] suffer from want of lymph because animal protein contains very little chlorophyll. Tigers and cats are carnivores, which is why they produce less milk. Cows and buffaloes produce much more milk because they take chlorophyll from green grass and green vegetation.” (2)

“It is, however, very necessary to remember two things in respect of edibles. First, as far as possible, articles of food must be selected from among those items in which development of consciousness is comparatively little; i.e., if vegetables are available, animals should not be slaughtered. Secondly, under all circumstances before killing any animal having developed or under-developed consciousness, it must be considered whether it is possible to live in a healthy body without taking such lives.” (2)

“Likewise, animals also have some special characteristics. On the basis of these characteristics, different categories of animals have been made. For example, some animals are carnivorous and others are graminivorous. Carnivorous animals eat meat, fish and eggs. According to the laws of nature, canine teeth are necessary for chewing meat properly. Carnivorous animals such as cats, dogs, tigers and lions possess canine teeth, but cows, monkeys, elephants, wild asses, etc. do not possess canine teeth. Nature does not want them to eat meat. But what do greedy human beings do? Even though they do not possess canine teeth, they cook or boil meat so that they can eat it. This is done out of greed. According to the laws of nature, human beings are not carnivorous. So, if they eat meat they will catch numerous diseases. Vegetarians generally suffer from fewer diseases than non-vegetarians because they are more habituated to following natural laws. You must have noticed that those who violate the laws of nature and become non-vegetarian, even though they do not possess canine teeth, have peculiar eating habits. Sometimes it even seems as if non-vegetarians eat like dogs. Non-vegetarians have trouble chewing meat properly because of the absence of canine teeth.” (2)

“Taking meat as food is harmful in hot countries, especially where vegetables are available in abundance. However, under medical advice, as a diet after recovery from illness or as one of the constituents of medicine, eating meat cannot be called either *himśá* (doing harm) or greed, because the meat is eaten under those circumstances only to maintain life. In extremely cold countries people eat animal flesh, wear animal skins and burn animal fat under the pressure of necessity.” (2)

“One may die if one eats the rotten flesh of a cow, goat or fish. A human being may be attacked with cholera, but a crow, jackal or vulture will not be harmed if it consumes rotten flesh. This is because of physical constitution. Some non-vegetarians can even digest stinking food such as cooked dried meat, dried fish, etc., but strict vegetarians will definitely become sick if they eat such food.”

Study Circle Questions:

1. Is it possible for a “good” or “peace loving” human being to be a non-vegetarian?

2. What is the relationship between “*Ahimsa*” (non-injury) and vegetarianism?
3. Do you know of examples of really intelligent vegetarians?
4. Is it possible for human beings to eat carnivorous animals, such as vultures, tigers, dogs or cats?
5. What are some of the “natural laws” that vegetarians follow that non-vegetarians do not follow?
6. What foods do you think have a high degree of chlorophyll in them?
7. Do you know anyone who consumes less greens in their diet? What is the result?
8. Is there any difference between a Neohumanistic vegetarian and other types of vegetarians?

3. Afforestation/Deforestation

“One of the greatest causes of environmental destruction is deforestation...

Approximately two-thirds of the surface of the globe is water and one-third is land, but due to deforestation the water portion is increasing and the land portion is decreasing... The exploitation of subterranean water reserves is contributing to desertification in many parts of the world, and as the subterranean water level recedes, the soil near the surface dries out and plants wither and die... Afforestation is the only solution to desertification. Human beings have suffered from water scarcity and drought in the past, and this problem will continue unless proper care is taken in the future. If deforestation and the indiscriminate exploitation of subterranean water reserves continue, it is likely that many parts of the world will face severe water shortages from 1993 to at least the year 2000. The only way to avoid such a catastrophe is to immediately implement a decentralized approach to water conservation...” (3)

“Many problems occur with the disappearance of trees. First, the carbon dioxide content in the air rises as there are fewer plants to absorb the carbon dioxide which is constantly being expired into the atmosphere. This results in changes in the atmosphere and the environment, causing climatic warming. If there is a rise of only a few feet in the level of the oceans, many major cities in the world, including Calcutta, could be flooded. In addition, as the catchment areas are destroyed, rivers reduce their flow of water or dry up. Also, the area around the rivers is transformed into a desert, as in the case of the Nile and the Ganges. Finally, the organic processes in the soil are halted. The micro-organisms die, and so do the worms, while the organic matter breaks down and ceases to retain water. Hence, the soil making process is stopped.” (3)

“In ancient times there was an abundance of woods and dense forests. On the one hand forests would attract clouds and cause heavy rainfall, and on the other hand they would prevent soil erosion by binding the soil to the outstretched roots of the plants. Most trees preserved water near their roots by binding the soil to their various root systems. Trees which have closely bunched root systems have the greatest capacity to preserve water. In winter or summer or in dry seasons when the level of water declines, trees slowly release the water they have accumulated, thereby keeping water flowing in the soil.

These days, due to reckless deforestation in many parts of the world, forest trees are deprived of that source of water. If this wanton destruction of plants and trees is not stopped, then in the near future the rainfall will drastically decrease and the frequency and intensity of floods will increase. Consequently lush, green vegetation will be transformed into arid deserts. This has already happened in the south-eastern portion of Rajasthan.

Today human beings have to be very cautious and restrained in this regard. Under no circumstances can reckless deforestation be permitted to continue. We must not forget even for a moment that the seed of destruction of the human race lies in the wanton destruction of forests. No more deforestation should be allowed. Our aim should be large scale afforestation.” (3)

“Deforestation causes drought because it prevents the plants from nourishing the earth. The fibrous roots of plants absorb and hold considerable amounts of water which is slowly released into the soil. In the paddy fields of Bengal, for example, during the dry season water will trickle down the channels beside the fields. Where does the water come from? It is released from the roots of the standing crops. But when the paddy and the associate crops are harvested, the supply of water dries up.” (3)

“To transform this depleted and undernourished environment, a massive, scientific afforestation programme has to be launched. Such a programme should have a two-phased approach:

1) In the first phase, fast growing trees which grow to their full height in six months to two years and provide valuable green cover should be planted. Ten types of trees can be used: 1. cassuarina 2. sisir (Albezzia lebbeck) 3. sisoo (Dalbergia) 4. bakphul (Sesbania grandiflora) 5. large screwpine (Pandanus andamanensium) 6. drumstick (Moringa oleifera) 7. red sandalwood (Santalum album) 8. agave (sisal, Agave americana) 9. Diospyros discolor, and 10. chámal (Eterocarpus chaplasi, Roxb.), a wild variety of jackfruit found in north east India.

2) In the second phase, slow growing trees like teak, which also provides green cover and can be harvested after 30 years or so, should be planted. The fast growing trees can be cut after three years, providing an additional source of income for local people. If this approach is followed, the ecological balance in the area will be restored very quickly.

In addition to this approach, some selected plants need to be grown in desert regions to check the process of desertification. For example, in dry, sandy areas we can grow jojoba which produces seeds that yield oil which can be substituted for diesel oil. Different

cactii, Acacia catechu or Acacia arabica can also be grown. Afforestation is the only solution to desertification.” (3)

“What do people do to meet their growing needs for agricultural lands, for industries, etc.? They bring about large-scale deforestation, but no one bothers to think about the creatures that live in those forests. So the tigers and elephants haunt the villages, kill the people, and demolish their houses. Why? Out of their instinct for self-preservation. We have destroyed their natural habitat, the forests, but we never bothered to consider any alternative arrangements for their shelter. We have recklessly destroyed large areas of forests without caring to think that thereby we are destroying the ecological balance among the human, plant and animal worlds. And we never realized – and still do not – that this wanton destruction of the animal and plant worlds, will be of no benefit to human beings. Rather it will be a great loss for human society.” (3)

Afforestation should be carried out on the banks of ponds, canals, dams, lakes, rivers and reservoirs...Scientific crop management is also an essential aspect of water conservation. For example, a field of barley requires less water to grow than a field of vegetables. If there are two fields side by side, one of barley and the other of vegetables, the vegetable crop will consume only seventy-five percent of the water normally used to irrigate it. If the other twenty-five percent is allowed to run off to the barley crop, that water will be sufficient to irrigate the barley. The barley crop will not require any special irrigation facilities....Fruit trees can store a large amount of water in their roots, so they should be planted along river banks and near paddy fields to help conserve water....fruit trees should be planted beside the rivulets. The water stored in the roots of the fruit trees will keep the soil moist and fertile. Care should be taken so that the branches of the fruit trees do not block the sunlight from the crops. If this system is followed, when the paddy is cut and the fields are drained of water, the rivulets will remain flowing. If fruit trees are planted along the banks of a river, it will always retain water...(3)

“Another way to help solve unemployment, especially in rural communities, is the utilization of plants for economic self-reliance. All socio-economic units have the potential to increase their plant and crop varieties by properly matching these with the soil, topography and climatic conditions etc. in their units. Reforestation can reclaim arid and semi-arid regions, and some unique plants like the Puranica or fern, which has the capacity to attract clouds, can help radically transform the rainfall and weather patterns of a region. Agro- and agrico-industries based upon the productive potential of different plants can also help solve rural unemployment by creating a range of new goods and services.” (3)

Study Circle Questions:

1. Do you have any experience in your area of the increase of flash flooding due to the depletion of forest trees?
2. What steps can be taken to reduce large scale deforestation in your area/province?
3. Is there any place where you can undertake a modest afforestation project using some of the trees mentioned here?

4. List some of the benefits that a tree provides to human beings?
5. In your area are there forest trees near to the water system, i.e. lake, pond, dam, reservoir, river or stream?
6. What trees or plants are suited to your area based on the soil, topography and climatic conditions?
7. What songs, movies or books inspire us to love and respect trees/forests?

4. Cruelty to Animals/Plants

“Every human being has had to pass through that sort of painful animal life in the past. But that does not mean we should be the cause of misery for those animals who have taken shelter with us today. On the contrary, we should have a merciful attitude towards them.” (5)

“Human life is more secure than animal life. Many animals live in the jungle where there is something to fear every minute; where the weak are the prey of the strong. To escape this atmosphere of fear and insecurity, many wild animals have sought refuge with human beings. They have been fed grass, leaves and other types of fodder until the right moment came to kill them for their flesh. Even today, this is generally what happens. Animals fully trust human beings; they trust them even up to one minute before their death. But when they see a person approaching them with a weapon in hand, they realize that those they had trusted as friends are actually their enemies. Although human beings feed their animals, the love or attachment which they have for them is purely external. There is no genuine love in them. This is how wretched animal life can be.” (5)

Study Circle Questions:

1. What would be some examples of “cruelty to plants”?
2. It is said that 90% of progress in scientific research comes through experiments using animals. What would be your opinion on using animals in experiments for scientific research?

5. Interconnectedness of human, animal and plant worlds

“Animals can move and the mental faculty is also a bit developed. Man also can move and the mental faculty is still more developed. But the difference between man and animal, the fundamental difference between man and animal, is that man (human life is an ideological flow) moves towards spirituality, and for an animal there is no spirituality – only eating, drinking, sleeping and dying. Human life is an ideological flow, and there lies the fundamental difference between man and animal.” (6)

“Here a question crops up – what is the difference between animals and plants? Primarily, plants are stationary, whereas animals are mobile. With the gradual evolution of the minds of plants, a time comes, a stage comes, when plants reach their highest point of evolution. But for animals, this is the lowest point. There are some well-known plants

which catch their prey and kill it. They extend their branches and sub-branches, grab hold of their nearby prey, then eat it. To a great extent, these plants behave like animals. In some other plants, floral nectar is produced in the flowers. It attracts hundreds of insects, which hover around the centre of the flower and suck up the sweet honey. The flowers of some such plants gradually close around the unsuspecting insects and devour them. This kind of plant cannot ordinarily be put into the category of plants, because such behaviour resembles that of animals. Such plants are not mobile – this is the only difference. However, there are some aquatic weeds, grasses and creepers which are also able to move. They go drifting from one place to another in lakes, rivers and the sea, stopping wherever they can to get the maximum food. Hence, it is more accurate to call these plants mobile rather than immobile....

“Plants follow plant *dharma* (innate nature) and animals follow animal *dharma*. Thus, plants and animals follow their own particular *dharma*, and there is nothing wrong in this. Tigers may attack and kill human beings, but this is not their fault. However, if human beings consume beef, then they are following animal *dharma*. Human beings have to follow their own *dharma*. The specialty of human beings is rationality, and because of this rationality there are four aspects of human *dharma*. Human beings move ahead through these four aspects. And those who progress through these four aspects can be described as following the path of human *dharma*. Thus, there are three *dharmas* – plant *dharma*, animal *dharma* and human *dharma*.” (6)

“Perhaps you know the story of the kumiir, ... crocodile in English ... The crocodile is a carnivorous creature. Although it likes to stay in water, it is not an aquatic animal. It enters the water to catch its prey, and after devouring its prey it returns to the bank and lies quietly with its mouth open. Small birds often come and eat the pieces of meat stuck between the teeth of the crocodile. What is the result? The birds get their food and the teeth of the crocodile are cleaned. At that time the crocodile does not close its mouth, or else the birds would be killed. This is a commercial transaction.” (6)

“Only humans are aware of their own identity. Plants, animals and material objects are not aware. A rupee does not know that it is a rupee. A mango tree does not know that it is a mango tree. A jackal does not know that it is a jackal. But humans know that they are human.” (6)

“Fundamentally, there are many differences amongst plant life, animal life, and human life. There are certain common factors as well. Plants, animals, and human beings require food, light, and water. These are the common factors. They sleep, they want to increase their number, and they die. These are the factors common to the three species, plants, animals, and humans... But these common factors do not make the plants animals or the humans animals. There are so many special factors. There are many differences between plants and animals, but the most important difference is that plants can't move, they are stationary, and animals can move. This mobility is a special factor, a special characteristic of animals. There are certain plants and also certain animals whose position is just between plant and animal.” (6)

“Animals can move and the mental faculty is also a bit developed. Man also can move and the mental faculty is still more developed. But the difference between man and animal, the fundamental difference between man and animal, is that man (human life is an ideological flow) moves towards spirituality, and for an animal there is no spirituality – only eating, drinking, sleeping and dying. Human life is an ideological flow, and there lies the fundamental difference between man and animal. So what should a man do? A man should decide at an early stage of his life what he is to do, what his mission in life is. The sooner it is done, the better it is, because you will get more chance, you will get ample scope to do, to materialize, to translate this goal into the actional flow.” (6)

“Each and every living being is guided by certain instincts. Plants have instincts, animals also have instincts, but human instincts are fewer in number than human psychic propensities. That is, in the case of humans, propensities are stronger than instincts; and here lies the fundamental difference between an animal and a man.” (6)

“There are certain plants which are more developed in intelligence than the most undeveloped animal species, but as they cannot move from place to place they are included in the plant kingdom. So the main difference is that animals can move whereas plants cannot. All plants are not equally intelligent and neither are all animals. Furthermore, some animal species are even more developed than the most undeveloped human beings.” (6)

“Human beings led by self-interest have been neglecting ecology at every step. We should remember that the sky and air, the hills and mountains, the rivers and forests, the wild animals and reptiles, the birds and fishes and all sorts of aquatic creatures and plants are all inseparably related to one another. Human beings are an integral part of that vast common society. No one can survive to the exclusion of others, not even human beings. If they continue to destroy forests, kill wild animals and exterminate fishes and birds foolishly, it won't serve any of their purposes. Whoever comes onto this world goes. One only survives on this earth for a limited period as stipulated by nature. Due to the foolishness of human beings many creatures and objects will not survive the period fixed for them by nature. Prior to their stipulated period of longevity they will be swallowed up by eternity. Human beings due to their utmost folly have annihilated numerous objects and thus prepared their own funeral pyre. Such folly on the part of human beings is unbearable. Human beings must be cautious from now on. They must restructure their thoughts, plans and activities in accordance with the dictates of ecology. There is no alternative.” (6)

Study Circle Questions:

1. Why is it considered against human *dharma* (innate nature) to eat beef?
2. Do you know of any other examples in nature of a symbiotic relationship as described earlier between the crocodile and the bird?
3. What is the difference between propensities and instincts?

4. Which animal species might be considered more intelligent than the least evolved humans?

6. Neohumanism and PCAP

“There is still another sentiment – the human sentiment. Many persons were born in the past who shed copious tears for suffering humanity. But strangely enough, after their eloquent speeches were over, they sat down comfortably at a dinner table and treated themselves to a delicious meal of fish – as if those fish had not suffered pain and death. This human sentiment has expressly violated the interests of non-human creatures, but its proponents found nothing wrong with it.” (7)

“Some people argue that animals have been created by *Parama Puruśa* (Supreme Consciousness) for our food. I knew a certain person who used to say that if people do not eat goat’s meat, the world would become populated only by goats. And others said, that if people don’t eat chickens, there would not be even a single inch of space on this earth – it would be filled with chickens! Now my point is, even though human beings do not eat vultures, is there a crowd of vultures in the world! How foolish such people are! People don’t eat earthworms – has there been an uncontrollable growth of earthworms on earth? Only out of excessive greed, people eat chickens and goats and are simply searching for logic to support their actions and cover up their weakness. This sort of cunning will not do.

In the mobility of the psychic worlds there are certain defective thoughts prevailing – that we humans are destined to rule this earth, and the creatures are destined to be ruled by us. You will have to fight against this type of psychology with the help of your strong weapon. What is that weapon? Neohumanism. All have the equal right to live here: this universe is for all, it is not the patrimony of human beings only.” (7)

(“Renaissance in All the Strata of Life”, Calcutta, 1986)

“When some people started advancing, they thought more about themselves and less about others, nor did they think about the animals and plants. But if we analyse with a cool brain, it becomes quite clear that just as my life is important to me, others’ lives are equally important to them; and if we do not give proper value to the lives of all creatures, then the development of the entire humanity becomes impossible. If people think more about themselves as individuals or about their small families, castes, clans or tribes, and do not think at all about the collectivity, this is decidedly detrimental. Similarly, if people neglect the entire living world – the plant world, the animal world – is this not indeed harmful? That is why I say that there is a great need to explain humanity and humanism in a new light, and this newly-explained humanism will be a precious treasure for the world.” (7)

“All the existential phenomena are emanating from the Existential Nucleus. The existential nucleus of a single individual is directly linked to the controlling point of the

Cosmic Nucleus of the cosmological order. According to Neohumanism, the final and Supreme Goal is to make one's individual existential nucleus coincide with the Cosmic Existential Nucleus. As a result, the individual's entire existence becomes one with the controlling Nucleus of the cosmological order, and that will be the highest expression of Neohumanism. That Neo-Humanistic status will save not only the human world but the plant and animal worlds also. In that supreme Neo-Humanistic status, the universal humanity will attain the consummation of its existence. Then nothing will be impossible for human beings; they will be able to do anything and everything.

Today's humanity is in despair; people think too much about their imperfections. They think, "Can I do it?" But in that supreme, Neo-Humanistic status, they will say, "Yes, I am a Neo-Humanistic being and I am destined to do great work; for that I have come on this earth. So there is no scope for doubt whether I can do it or not." (7)

"Now it is high time to make a reappraisal of the downtrodden humanity, of the downtrodden humanism. Oftentimes, some people have lagged behind, exhausted, and collapsed on the ground, their hands and knees bruised and their clothes stained with mud. Such people have been thrown aside with hatred and have become the outcasts of society; they have been forced to remain isolated from the mainstream of social life. This is the kind of treatment they have received. Few have cared enough to lift up those people who lagged behind, and help them forward." (7)

"In the higher stages of *sādhaná* (spiritual practice), *sādhakas* (spiritual aspirants) feel that all the living beings are their own. In sympathy with the joys and sorrows of all living beings, they help all creatures.

And you know, this charm of life is not only associated with flora or fauna but with all entities, even with inanimate objects – gold, iron, water, everything – because everything is living in this universe, everything is dancing in the rhythm of *Parama Puruśa*.

"But where such a spiritual mentality is lacking, people think, "I am doing, I am giving, this was done by me, that was done by me, etc." Though people at this stage are moving on the path of *sādhaná*, still there is some defect in them. Their minds do not inspire the lives of others; their minds do not touch the minds of others. They do not reach the sweetness of others' I-feelings, for they are too preoccupied with themselves. Their approach is defective; their path is not the path of Neohumanism.

And when spiritual aspirants enter the final phase and become one with *Parama Puruśa*, there remains no duality in them. They will realize that everything is in Him, everything cometh from Him, remaineth in Him, and goeth back to Him. There is no question of any duality. Everything becomes theirs, and they become everyone's." (7)

"Another example of how human beings destroy the inanimate world is the repeated detonation of atomic bombs. Atomic explosions create huge craters and large

underground caverns in the crust of the earth. They produce dark clouds in the atmosphere and devastate the ecological balance of the environment. The inanimate world is the creation of *Parama Puruṣa*. By exploding atomic weapons human beings are wounding the psychic projection of *Parama Puruṣa*, and this will seriously affect the ecological balance of the earth.” (7)

Study Circle Questions:

1. What historical figures exhibited selfless love towards animals or plants? What was their nature or personality like? How close were they to the ideals of Neohumanism?
2. Do you know anyone who loves to feed animals or care for plants? What is their nature like?
3. What is the greatest defect with the Humanist philosophy?
4. What is the major difference between humanism and Neohumanism?
5. If a person has been practicing sadhana for many years but does not try to help animals and plants, is he/she spiritually advanced?
6. Why is a self-centered person considered spiritually backward?
7. What would you prefer in a leader: someone who inspires your head or someone who inspires your heart? Why?
8. Do you think people can not feel the sufferings of animals because of: a. ignorance, b. insensitivity or c. adherence to religious dogmas and beliefs?

7. Medicinal Herbs

“Herbs and medicinal plants should be given special importance. Some plants are very useful in helping cure mental disorders. For example, brahmi sag [*Herpestis monniera* H. B. & K.] increases memory power and is good for the brain. Bottle gourd (lau) [*Lagenaria vulgaris* Seringe] is good for the mentally disturbed. Bhringaraj [*Wedelia calendulacea* Less.] oil can be used to treat the insane. Tulsi nishanda or oil extracted from basil seeds can be used to treat madness. Other plants are useful in treating physical disorders. For example, kalmegh [*Andrographis paniculata* Nees.] or cirota, which is dried kalmegh, prevents malaria. Cinchona is a source of quinine. Phaniphall [*Trapa bispinosa* Roxb.] is good for stomach and intestinal disorders.” (8)

“The prehistoric human beings did not know the science of pharmacology; they directly used the plants and herbs to cure diseases. In those days people, particularly in India, came in contact with nine kinds of special plants having special values, such as medicinal value, food value, etc.... Kadalii is a very nutritious food item. In case of intermittent fever, kadalii [plantain] is a very good medicine. Moreover, it helps the liver, pancreas, and kidneys to function smoothly, and it is also a good medicine for dysentery. Moreover, it is an ideal food for those mothers whose children die young. Overripe bananas (preferably with black patches) are a very good medicine for children who develop rickets because of the scarcity of milk after their mother’s death. If you make a paste of them, this has even greater value than mother’s milk...The second plant is kacu,

arum (*Colocasia antiquorum* Schott). Arum has less food value, but it is very good for the kidneys.

The third plant is haridrá, turmeric. Turmeric is a good spice and is highly antiseptic also. Here haridrá does not mean dry turmeric, but green turmeric (*káncá halud*) taken fresh from the earth. The turmeric which is dried in the sun is called *shuńt halud*, which people buy in the market for cooking purposes. Green turmeric is not used in cooking; it has a poisonous effect. People may die if they consume much of it. But it is antiseptic; it cures skin diseases and purifies the blood....Next is *jayantii* (*Sesbania aegyptiaca* Pers.) Its roots have great medicinal value, especially for white leprosy. In fact, *jayantii* is a medicine for four out of the seven kinds of discolouring skin diseases....Next is Ashoka (*Saraca indica* Linn), which is called in Hindi *siitá ashoka*. Simply ashoka, in Hindi, is *devaduru* [pine-tree]. But the ashoka which has medicinal value is *siitá ashoka*. It is an ideal medicine for all kinds of female diseases. The wine made out of ashoka is *ashokariśta* or *ashokásava*. Thus ashoka has great medicinal value.

Next is *bilva*, bel-fruit (wood apple). Unripe bel is the best medicine for all stomach diseases. Unripe bel should be eaten after roasting; ripe bel is not very good. *Bil* means “minute hole”: the fruit which enters the minute holes and does good to the stomach is called *bilva*....Next is *dádimba* (pomegranate). Its bark, roots and fruits are all very good medicines for all kinds of female diseases. In *áyurvaedik* schools of medicine, as practised both in India and in China, these qualities of *dádimba* are recognized. Next is *mán* (*Alocasia indica* Schott). Of all the varieties of starchy food that help in building flesh in the human body, *mán* is unique. It has better qualities than potatoes or even jackfruit seeds.

Jackfruit seeds have two-and-a-half times more food value than potatoes. Prior to the arrival of potatoes in India, people here used to eat jackfruit seeds. And *mán* is even higher in food value than jackfruit seeds. Besides this, *mán* has a cooling effect on the body. It is a good medicine in the summer, when the body becomes very heated and people get nosebleeds. It is both food and medicine....Next is *dhánya*, paddy....One of the common uses of rice is this: one can easily prepare wine from it, and from the wine, various types of medicine can be prepared. (8)

“Now turmeric does have one quality, it is an antidote to poison; and if you eat turmeric, it kills hookworms;” (8)

“Since the advent of living beings on this earth, medicines have been used. Dogs, cats, snakes, mongooses – all animals, in fact all beings – need some kind of medicine in various conditions. When wild animals become sick, they rub their bodies against certain trees and plants to cure their ailments. This shows that all living beings are more or less acquainted with some types of medicine.” (8)

Study Circle Questions:

1. Share amongst yourselves the medicinal or food value of different herbs and plants.
2. Do you have any experiences with the herbal plants mentioned in this section?
3. Do you know of any valuable herbs from traditional healers in your area/country?

8. Existential Value and Utility Value

“Each and every living entity, whether plant or animal, has two types of value: one, its ‘utility value’ and the other, its ‘existential value’.

Human beings usually preserve those creatures which have an immediate utility value for them: for example, cows. Human beings protect them for their own benefit because cows have some utility.

But when people are able to prepare synthetic milk by chemical process, they will also stop breeding cattle. That day people will either kill the cows by starving them or they will themselves eat the cows.

Who says that those creatures who have lost their immediate utility value have no right to exist? No one has the moral right to say this. No one can dare to say that only human beings have the right to live, and not non-humans. All are the children of Mother Earth; all are the offspring of the Supreme Consciousness. Most creatures have existential value, although they may not be valuable to human beings, or we may not be aware that their existence has some significance. Oftentimes we cannot know the utility value, or the existential value, of a creature; we wrongly think that it has no existential value. This is the height of foolishness.

Even those creatures which have no utility value for human beings, or whose utility value has ceased; which have no existential value for human beings, or whose existential value has ceased; still have the right to live. Even those animals which have negative utility value, instead of positive, and negative entitative [existential] value, instead of positive – human beings will have to try to preserve even those animals by creating a congenial environment for them instead of destroying them. And they will also have to provide adequate safeguards so that those creatures may not prove injurious. If, in the absence of proper safeguards, those undeveloped creatures do harm to humans, the fault does not lie with those creatures but with the human beings. Human beings are endowed with developed intellect – why do they not make adequate arrangements to protect themselves?

One more thing must be said – that non-human creatures have the same existential value to themselves as human beings have to themselves. Perhaps human beings can understand the value of their existence, while other living beings cannot: this is the only difference. Even so, no one has delegated any authority to human beings to kill those unfortunate creatures. (9)

Study Circle Questions:

1. What animals, plants or insects have a negative utility value?
2. What creatures would have a negative existential value?
3. What would be a “congenial environment” for animals having a negative utility value?
4. What are possible solutions for a Master Unit that has cows but does not know what to do with the male cows. The local customs are not used to using cows for ploughing. Should our Master Units sell the male cows?

9. Water Crisis

“Neohumanism also ensures the proper guarantee, treatment and utilization of the inanimate world. You should serve the inanimate world by guaranteeing it proper treatment...

Human beings have not taken proper care of the inanimate world. For example, human beings have damaged and destroyed many hills and mountains. You should not destroy the mountains and hills, otherwise the rainfall will be affected. You should not use subterranean water or encourage the use of deep or shallow tube wells, because too much reliance on these types of wells causes the level of the water table to go down, which in turn causes the soil to dry out, killing the plant life. It is best to use rain water, river water and reservoirs to collect rain water instead of subterranean water. “(10)

“Riverside plantations are important for preventing floods, conserving water, regulating the flow of water in rivers, and keeping soil moist and fertile. Some examples of plants which are useful riverside trees include banyan, date palm, neem or margosa, tamarind, simul, imli and fruit trees. If horticulture is developed along the banks of rivers, the rivers will never dry up.

Most trees with tap root systems do not alleviate riverside erosion, but eucalyptus is an exception. Trees with tap roots draw water from deep under the ground. Many tap root trees growing in an area can lower the water table and deprive other plants of water, and this can be an additional factor in the creation of desert conditions. For example, eucalyptus trees have contributed to the sparse, arid conditions in Australia. Eucalyptus trees are suitable for planting in marshy areas to help dry them out and are useful for preventing grass fires, but they are not recommended as part of a reforestation programme. As eucalyptus helps check riverside erosion, it can also be a useful riverside tree, but it should always be planted in association with other trees. An example of a riverside plantation is neem, tamarind, simul and eucalyptus. Between each of these trees, palmyra and date palm should be planted alternately. A second example is imli, neem and simul in either of two configurations – imli, neem, imli, etc. or imli, simul, imli, etc. Imli is a good riverside plant because it retains water and checks soil erosion. It has an extremely fibrous root system.

Fibrous roots gather water near the surface and benefit neighbouring plants and trees. Many banyan trees have been planted along the seven rivers in *Ánanda Nagar* for this reason... So, lakeside and riverside plantations stop soil erosion, nourish the top soil and assist in providing a steady supply of water throughout the year. This method of plantation should be adopted everywhere.” (10)

“In the near future there will be a severe crisis in many parts of the world. Many large rivers like the Ganga, the Jamuna and the Thames are already very polluted. People cannot drink this water, and if they even wash their hands in it they can become infected. The only solution is to rely on rainwater. We must collect the rainwater, develop the science of making artificial rain through helium or any other process, and bring the clouds which rain over the ocean onto the land. Constructing more deep tube wells is not the answer. Rather, we must catch the rainwater where it falls. Many ponds, canals, dams, lakes and reservoirs should be immediately constructed to catch the rainwater and store it for drinking water. This is the only way out of the water crisis that will confront humanity in the very near future...” (10)

“I have already said that constructing more deep tube wells is not the solution to the water crisis. What are the drawbacks of well irrigation? Well irrigation causes the level of the water-table to drop, while the continuous use of well irrigation dries up the subterranean flow of water. Initially the effects of continuous well irrigation may not be easy to perceive, but eventually a fertile region will be transformed into a desert. In fact, if the subterranean water level stays at above twenty to twenty-five feet, the surface vegetation will not be affected, but if it drops below fifty feet, the surface of the earth will become a barren wasteland.

The negative effects of well irrigation include the following:

- 1) Neighbouring shallow wells dry up creating the problem of lack of drinking water.
- 2) Trees, orchards and large plants do not get sufficient subterranean water so they wither and die. Green countryside will become a desert after thirty to forty-five years of intensive well irrigation.
- 3) In some deep tube wells enemy elements – that is, elements which are harmful to the soil such as heavy minerals and mineral salts – get mixed with the water, causing problems such as salinity. As a result, the land eventually becomes infertile and unfit for cultivation. When the flow of well water stops, irrigation tanks supplied by these wells also dry up.” (10)

“The banks of all water systems should be covered by dense forests. The science behind this is that the roots of the trees retain water. When the water-table subsides, the roots of the trees slowly release water. Hence, a pond surrounded by trees will never run dry. The

foliage of the trees also minimizes evaporation. Besides this, the leaves of the trees have very small pores which attract clouds, so the trees help to increase the rainfall...

Afforestation must be carried out both intensively and extensively. The best approach is to plant both fast growing and slow growing trees together. Planting only slow growing trees is uneconomic because we will have to wait thirty, fifty, seventy or one hundred years to get the desired result. And planting only fast growing trees will not provide any long term benefits. So both intensive and extensive afforestation should be done immediately. After reaching maturity, the trees can be selectively cut and sold.”

“The inner spirit of our water conservation programme is that the amount of existing surface water should be immediately doubled. But it is preferable if it is increased tenfold. This can best be done by a decentralized approach to water management which increases the depth, the area, or both, of water storage systems. The first step is to increase the depth of those ponds, tanks, dams, lakes, rivers and reservoirs which are already being used for storing water. The second step is to increase the area of these storage facilities, while the third step is to increase the plantations around them. How can these plantations be increased by a factor of ten? By increasing the number of rows of plants around each water storage system five times, and by reducing the distance between each plant by half. In addition to this, many new small-scale ponds, tanks, dams, lakes and reservoirs should also be constructed. As a general rule, surface water should always be utilized in preference to subterranean water.” (10)

Study Circle Questions:

1. How is rainfall affected by the destruction of mountains and hills?
2. Do you know of any examples where rain water is harvested and kept in a reservoir, lake, dam, pond, etc.?
3. Have you seen or heard of a negative result from relying too much on wells for irrigation, etc.?